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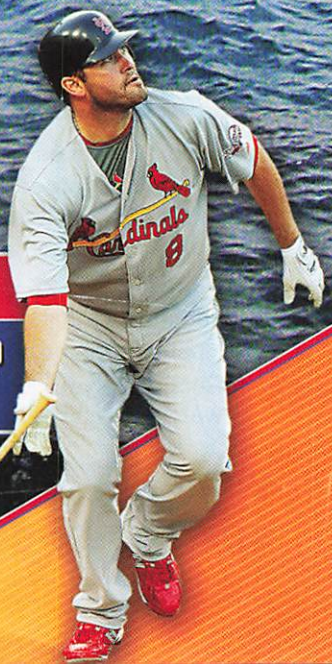
CURACAO'S NEW STAR

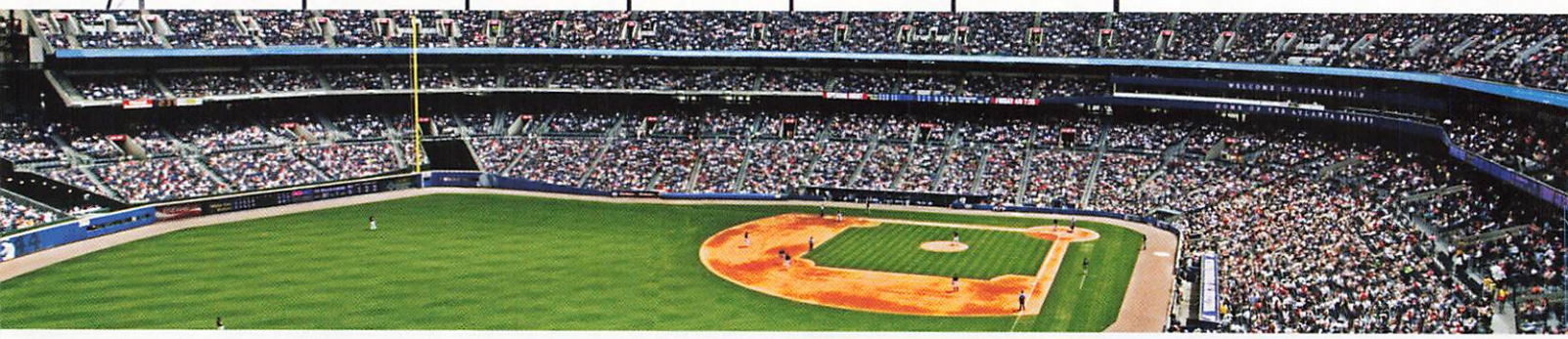
An Island Visit With Jair Jurrjens



POWER POTENTIAL

Troy Glaus Adds Right-Handed Pop At First Base

THE MAGIC OF TURNER FIELD



2010 SEASON SCHEDULE

APRIL

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2 CWS EXH 7:00	3 CWS EXH 1:00
4	5 CHI 4:00	6	7 CHI 7:00	8 CHI 7:00	9 SF 4:30	10 SF TBD
11 SF 4:00	12 SD 6:30	13	14 SD 10:00	15 SD 6:30	16 COL 7:30	17 COL 7:00
18 COL 1:30	19	20 PHI 7:00	21 PHI 7:00	22 PHI 7:00	23 NYM 7:00	24 NYM 1:00
25 NYM 8:00	26 STL 8:00	27 STL 8:00	28 STL 8:00	29 STL 1:30	30 HOU 7:30	

MAY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1 HOU 3:00
2 HOU 1:30	3	4 WAS 7:00	5 WAS 7:00	6 WAS 7:00	7 PHI 7:00	8 PHI 3:00
9 PHI 1:30	10 MIL 8:00	11 MIL 8:00	12 MIL 1:00	13	14 ARI 7:30	15 ARI 7:00
16 ARI 1:30	17 NYM 7:00	18 NYM 7:00	19 CIN 7:00	20 CIN 1:00	21 PIT 7:00	22 PIT 7:00
23 PIT 1:30	24	25 FLA 7:00	26 FLA 7:00	27 FLA 7:00	28 PIT 7:30	29 PIT 7:00
30 PIT 1:30	31 PHI 1:00					

JUNE

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1 PHI 7:00	2 PHI 1:00	3 LAD 10:00	4 LAD 10:00	5 LAD 10:00
6 LAD TBD	7 ARI 9:30	8 ARI 9:30	9 ARI 9:30	10 ARI 3:30	11 MIN 8:00	12 MIN 7:00
13 MIN 2:00	14	15 TB 7:00	16 TB 7:00	17 TB 7:00	18 KC 7:30	19 KC 7:00
20 KC 1:30	21	22 CWS 8:00	23 CWS 8:00	24 CWS 2:00	25 DET 7:30	26 DET 7:00
27 DET 1:30	28 WAS 7:00	29 WAS 7:00	30 WAS 7:00			

JULY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2 FLA 7:30	3 FLA 4:00
4 FLA 1:30	5 PHI 7:00	6 PHI 7:00	7 PHI 7:00	8	9 NYM 7:00	10 NYM 4:00
11 NYM 1:00	12 13 14 ALL-STAR GAME ANAHEIM			15 MIL 7:00	16 MIL 7:30	17 MIL 7:00
18 MIL 1:30	19	20 SD 7:00	21 SD 7:00	22 SD 1:00	23 FLA 7:00	24 FLA 7:00
25 FLA 1:00	26	27 WAS 7:00	28 WAS 7:00	29 WAS 12:30	30 CIN 7:00	31 CIN 7:00

AUGUST

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1 CIN 1:00	2 NYM 7:00	3 NYM 7:00	4 NYM 7:00	5 SF 7:00	6 SF 7:30	7 SF 4:00
8 SF 1:30	9 HOU 8:00	10 HOU 8:00	11 HOU 2:00	12	13 LAD 7:30	14 LAD 7:00
15 LAD 1:30	16 LAD 7:00	17 WAS 7:00	18 WAS 7:00	19 WAS 1:00	20 CHI 2:00	21 CHI 4:00
22 CHI 2:00	23 COL 8:30	24 COL 8:30	25 COL 3:00	26	27 FLA 7:30	28 FLA 4:00
29 FLA 1:30	30 NYM 7:00	31 NYM 7:00				

SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1 NYM 7:00	2 NYM 7:00	3 FLA 7:00	4 FLA 7:00
5 FLA 1:00	6 PIT 1:30	7 PIT 7:00	8 PIT 7:00	9 STL 7:00	10 STL 7:30	11 STL 4:00
12 STL 1:30	13 WAS 7:00	14 WAS 7:00	15 WAS 12:00	16	17 NYM 7:00	18 NYM 4:00
19 NYM 1:00	20 PHI 7:00	21 PHI 7:00	22 PHI 7:00	23	24 WAS 7:00	25 WAS 1:00
26 WAS 1:30	27 FLA 7:00	28 FLA 7:00	29 FLA 7:00	30	1 PHI 7:30	2 PHI 7:00
3 PHI 1:30						

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Braves

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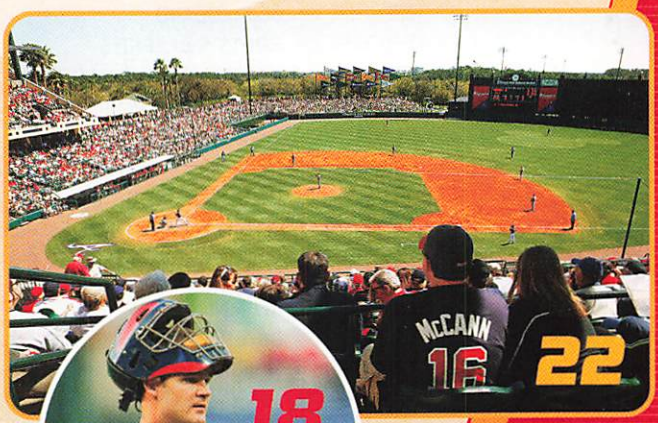

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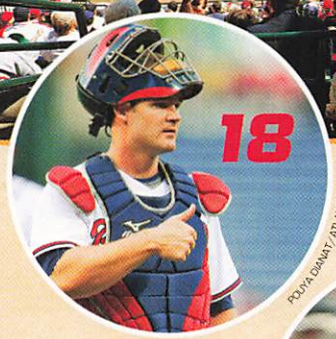

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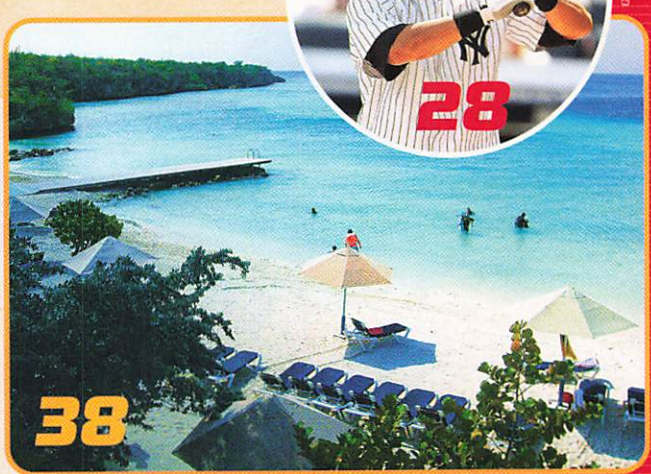

PATTY RASMUSSEN

COVER CREDITS

JAIR JURRJENS
by Patty Rasmussen

Bobby Cox: Atlanta Braves

Troy Glaus: Getty Images/
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Braves

CURACAO'S NEW STAR

A Visit With Jair Jurrjens On His Native Island That Shaped Him As A Pitcher And As A Man

Jair Jurrjens stands near the 124-year-old Queen Emma Bridge that connects the two sides of downtown Willemstad for pedestrians.

This floating market is formed by a group of boats, mainly from Venezuela, that are filled with fresh produce and spices.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY PATTY RASMUSSEN

FOR MOST BRAVES FANS, their first introduction to the island of Curacao came through a young centerfielder named Andruw Jones who made a splashy entrance on the national stage by hitting two home runs as a 19-year-old rookie in the 1996 World Series. They continued to be dazzled as Jones made one spectacular catch after another at Turner Field for the next 10 years until his free agent departure to the Los Angeles Dodgers in 2007.

Little did anyone know that a new star from Curacao, a young pitcher named Jair Jurrjens, then 22, was waiting in the wings, ready to shine brightly for the Braves.

Jurrjens is many things. He's one of the best young pitchers in the majors, with excellent credentials, statistics and professional poise that belie his age of 24. In only two full seasons in the major leagues, Jurrjens has compiled a 30-21 record, and last year, his 2.60 ERA ranked third in the National League, trailing only Chris Carpenter and Cy Young winner Tim Lincecum.

Statistics don't begin to paint the full picture of just how good a pitcher Jurrjens really is, though. He is respected by the managers he's played for, two of the old-school variety, Jim Leyland in Detroit and Bobby Cox in Atlanta. He is appreciated by his teammates who are amazed at his ability to balance the work ethic necessary for pitching success with a love and joy for the game, found in his ever-present smile.

But Jurrjens is much more than a ballplayer. He's a dutiful and loving son, the "baby" in the family of father Carl and mother Esther Jurrjens. He loves and protects his older siblings, brother Carl Jr., and sister Charlotte, even as he playfully picks at Charlotte whenever she walks by him.

He's also a true and loyal friend to those he played baseball with in his native country. He's respectful of his elders, as well as of friends and strangers who greet him on the street, and of visitors to Curacao. He loves his country, so much so that he even said winning the Senior League World Series in 2002 is one of the highlights of his life.

"Hearing your national anthem and seeing your flag go up..." his voice trailed away. "There's nothing like it."

It's on Curacao, the small island nation of just over 140,000 people in the Caribbean Ocean, only 35 miles north of Venezuela, where the clearest picture of Jurrjens emerges. Away from the trappings of baseball, the flashy lifestyle and adulation, Jurrjens is most comfortable. He lives in the same house he grew up in, only a few miles from downtown Willemstad, the capital city of Curacao.

It's an ordinary neighborhood with brightly painted houses close together, fenced yards, tiny streets, and a slower pace of life. And Jurrjens isn't in a hurry to change anything.

He still works out with his baseball friends, his "homeboys" as he calls them, at the baseball field behind Marchena Hardware, the home building supply company that funded his Little League team.

Part one of Jurrjens' off-season routine includes remaining in the U.S. for two months after the end of the season. He has friends he wants to see, mostly in Florida, though in the past, he's traveled to Michigan to visit a host family he lived with when still in the Detroit farm system. The Tigers originally signed him in 2003.

"Every off-season, I drive to Lakeland, Fla., at least twice to see

Jair poses with his family, (L-R) brother Carl Jr., mother Esther, sister Charlotte and father Carl Sr.

the (Detroit Tigers) minor league people there," he said. "They're part of my family, even though I'm not there anymore. They spent a lot of time and care for me when I was in the minor leagues, teaching me how to be a professional, and I won't ever forget that."

But soon after Thanksgiving, Jair packs to return to the island for the next two and a half months.

It's a joyful reunion for the family. He affectionately calls his parents "Daddy" and "Mommy." Carl Jr., lives at home, also. He's hearing impaired but works at UTS, the premier telecommunications company in the Caribbean, where his father also worked for 30 years prior to his retirement. Charlotte, who is in university in Holland, also comes home for the Christmas holidays.

By U.S. standards, the Jurrjens home is modest, just three bedrooms and one bath, a small living and dining room, kitchen and breezy porch in front. After Jair signed his first contract, an addition was put on the back of the house which includes a large family room with tile floor, two small rooms where Jurrjens expects to furnish his bedroom, and a patio.

The yards are plain, no grass, mainly because of year-round direct sun and the cost of maintaining a lawn. Out front, Jurrjens made two changes. He had a parking pad of brick pavers put in and an automatic privacy gate installed.

The house is furnished simply and neatly. The living room has a large television, and the family room has an even larger, flat-screen television.

"Daddy went a little crazy," said Jair.

But that's to be expected of Carl Sr., since his son is playing for his dream team.

"Back in the days when he listened to baseball on the radio, he would listen to the Braves, and he liked Hank Aaron," said Jair of his dad. "That's why I got a ball signed by Hank for him. That was his idol. I think he became a Braves fan for Hank."

A photo of Jair in his first Detroit Tigers uniform hangs on the wall, and there are plaques and milestone baseballs piled up in an armoire in the living room, including his first major league hit, April 25, 2008, in his first season with the Braves.

The deal that brought Jurrjens to the Braves was a dream come true for him and for his father. Frank Wren's first trade as general manager came on Oct. 29, 2007, when he sent veteran shortstop Edgar Renteria to the Tigers in exchange for Jurrjens and minor league outfielder Gorkys Hernandez, now with Pittsburgh.

Jair could hardly believe his luck. He says it was the second "miracle phone call" he received. The first came on Aug. 12, 2007, his call to the big leagues from Double A. Jurrjens doesn't mind repeating the story and sets the scene, noting that starting pitching for the Tigers was in disarray.

"Everyone at the big league level was going down (injured)," said Jurrjens. "Kenny Rogers had gone down. Andrew Miller had gone down, too. They called a couple of guys up from Triple A, but they didn't really do the job. Jim Leyland made the announcement that he was going to Double A and try to find someone."

Fortunately for Jair, he was in a groove at the right time.

"There was another guy having a better season than me, but

The front of the Jurrjens' family home (L) features a comfortable, breezy porch (R).

the last three starts I had were good," he recalled. "I had a complete game with 10 strikeouts, a seven-inning (start) with 10 strikeouts, and another seven innings with eight strikeouts."

Jair said he was shopping with teammates at Circuit City on an off-day in Reading, Pa., when he got the call that he would have the opportunity to make his major league debut at Cleveland.

"I started shaking and sat down in the middle of the store," said Jurrjens with quiet emotion in his voice. "The guys with me were asking me what happened, and I told them. Then I called my dad, but my hands were shaking so much. It was the best feeling, calling him. I told him what happened. He started crying."

Esther broke in, "Daddy was already planning to make the trip!"

Jair credits his father and his brother with developing his love for baseball. It also helped that it was a sport he could play year-round.

"I grew up watching my big brother play, and he used to play with me in the backyard from the time I was four years old," he said. "He is the most important one who helped me to be what I am right now."

When he played youth baseball, Jair was an infielder until scouts suggested he focus on pitching. Though his father was not a pitching instructor, Jurrjens said his admonition to make "perfect throws" helped him become a pitcher.

"Having him do that made pitching a little easier, because he would get upset with me every time I made a bad throw," said Jurrjens. "And making perfect throws translated to pitching."

A normal day in Jurrjens' life on the island during the off-season is simple, just the way he likes it. He gets up around 8 a.m. and might get a quick bite to eat before heading to the baseball field to meet his workout partners. These are guys he's known since they were in school and playing Little League together.

"They have my back, and I have theirs," he said.

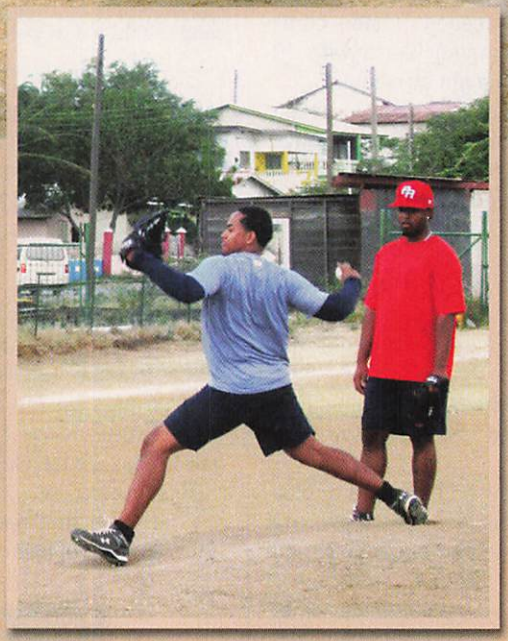
Among the group are Shairon Martis, pitcher with the Washington Nationals who made his major league debut in 2008 against Atlanta, Diego Markwell, pitcher on the Dutch National team, Rhiency Imperator and Giovanne Samboe, players on a club team in Holland, Kenley Jensen a pitcher in the Los Angeles Dodgers organization, Dashenko Ricardo a catcher in the Baltimore Orioles organization, and Dennis Neuman pitcher in the Red Sox organization.

Asked who's in charge of the workout, Jurrjens replied, "Everyone is a grown up here. They know what they need to do."

The players stretch as they talk and joke. They lightly jog to the outfield and back. Three goats meander just outside the outfield fence, clambering over rocks and bleating. After long toss, Ricardo puts on the catcher's gear and Jair digs at the rocky mound with the toe of his shoe, trying to find a foothold. While Jair throws, Jensen talks about what it's like to see his friend find such success.

"The thing that really sticks out is his poise," said Jensen. "He's young, but he acts like he's been out there for 20 years. But

Jair gives his mother, Esther, a kiss, perhaps as thanks for the chicken and homemade French fries she just prepared for him.



Jurrjens works out at the field behind Marchena Hardware, that sponsored his Little League team, along with long-time friends (L-R) Diego Markwell, Dashenko Ricardo, Dennis Neuman, and Kenley Jensen.

the best thing is that he hasn't changed a bit. He's still the same great person he always was, willing to help you, willing to share his experiences with you, and always with a smile on his face."

The Dodgers plan to convert Jensen to a pitcher. While he works on his repertoire, Jurrjens watches him carefully.

"I won't try to coach him, because that's not my place," said Jurrjens. "But if I can help him or tell him something I did, I'll do that."

Despite all the compliments from his friends, Jair quickly points out that he was no saint growing up, not even when he attended Maria College, a local Catholic high school. He drives over to the school and stands in the schoolyard, reminiscing.

"We had class books that showed our behavior," he said. "My dad was called in, and the teacher pointed in the book, showing him that I had been disturbing the class, 'Here, here, here.' I know when my dad is mad. His glasses go to the end of his nose, and he looks at me. That day he was mad."

Suddenly, a couple of Jair's former teachers walk up to him in the courtyard. Frau Lieuw and Professor Palm greet him warmly and ask how things are going, telling him they watch every time he pitches. They also tell him, not for the first time in his life, the principal would like to see him.

Jair walks to the administration office, and a delighted Frau Closter stands and gives him a hug. They talk for a few minutes, and she invites him to visit the students sometime before he leaves for the States. The school's pride in Jair is evident. For his part, Jurrjens is grateful.

"They gave me so much help when I was coming up," he said. "Frau Closter would give me breaks from school to play in tournaments. They gave me the opportunity to play. They knew I was trying to get ahead, and they didn't want me to waste the gift I had."

It's not an exaggeration to say that when Jurrjens pitches, Curacao watches. Bars and restaurants know they need to have the MLB package, or else they won't have any patrons every fifth day! Then they tune their televisions to Braves games and get together to watch their native son ply his trade.

They watch at the Jurrjens home, too. That is, Carl and Carl Jr., watch. Esther still can't bring herself to watch her son pitch. She gets too nervous. Charlotte watches the games via computer in Holland.

After finishing the baseball portion of their workout, Jair and his friends generally head to Geoffrey's Gym, where they lift weights or do other strength exercises. Finally, around noon, they knock off. Jair heads home for dinner - the noon meal is the biggest meal of the day. Carl Jr., comes home from work, too.

Esther is a great cook, according to Jair, especially when she makes one of his favorite meals - chicken and homemade French fries, complete with a dab of hot sauce on the side.

Then, after playing a few video games like most other 24-year-olds, Jair takes a nap. He wakes around 4 o'clock and spends time with his parents before going out to a club with his friends

A billboard in front of the Curacao Sports Federation features pictures of Wladimir Balentien, Andruw Jones and Jurrjens, three players from Curacao that are in the majors.

much later at night.

Jurrjens' cousin, Juni Juliet, is a professional entertainer, a keyboardist and singer, who has worked in Europe and throughout the Caribbean. He is playing at a club called Omundo in Willemstad, and Jurrjens and his friends meet around 11:30 p.m. to listen to music, dance and talk.

The place is packed with locals and with Dutch tourists. Winter is high season for European vacationers seeking to escape the cold. The guys stay out late, but Jair is back at the baseball field the next day to work out. He knows time is getting short before he heads back to the States for the 2010 season. Likewise, time has grown short for Charlotte, who's heading back to Holland after the Christmas break.

The atmosphere in the Jurrjens home, usually so lively, is subdued as Charlotte takes her suitcases to the car and puts last-minute items in her carryon bag. Finally, it's time to say goodbye. She hugs her brothers and begins to softly weep. Jair holds on to her, soothing her. Unless she makes a trip to the U.S. this summer, it might be December before Charlotte sees Jair again.

Last season, the family made two trips to Atlanta to watch Jair play. Carl Sr. hopes to visit spring training this year, in addition to making more trips to Atlanta.

But for now, the family is enjoying their time together in Curacao.

"The great thing about being home is the feeling of love I get from the people," said Jair.

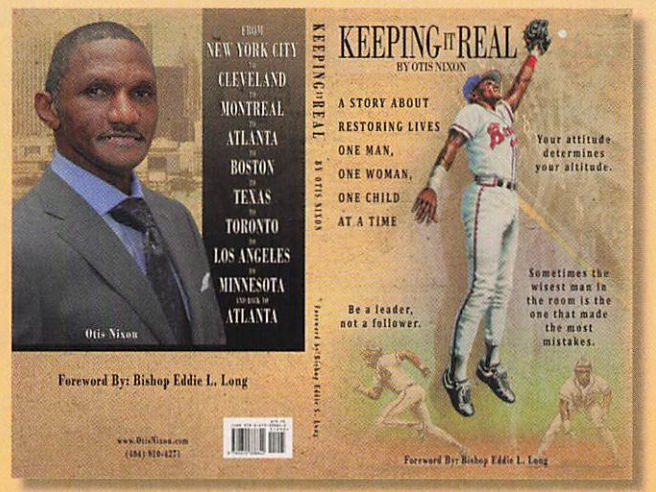
He even gets high praise from Jarrod Dijkhuizen, the guy serving arepas - corn flour flatbreads filled with meat, seafood or cheeses - on the corner of Winston Churchill Weg and Roosevelt Weg. He's a self-confessed New York Yankees fan that has a soft place in his heart for the Atlanta Braves, because they signed and developed Andruw Jones.

"Andruw Jones will always be special," said Dijkhuizen, "but in Curacao, there is a new star - Jair Jurrjens."

For much more on our visit with Jair Jurrjens, see pages 34-38.

One look at the beautiful white beach and clear blue water at Porto Mari, a famous snorkeling and diving destination, shows why Curacao is so popular with tourists.

CATCH A BOOK...



OTIS NIXON ALWAYS BELIEVED his story was worth telling, but when he actually saw his recently published self-written book, "Keeping it Real," in print, he was no less humbled or satisfied.

The 51-year-old former Braves centerfielder (1991-93, '99), his life a rollercoaster of gratifying highs and depressing lows, spent the past eight years working on the project. Nixon, who stole 620 bases during his 17-year career in the major leagues, has grown increasingly open and outspoken about his battles with drugs and alcohol. Writing the book provided yet another outlet.

"Timing is everything," said Nixon, best-remembered for making "The Catch" on July 25, 1992, to preserve a 13-game winning streak that propelled the Braves to a second straight World Series appearance. "It was time for it. You look around at some of the things that are going on in sports – the steroids, the Tiger Woods situation, guys in the NBA fighting with guns over gambling – and politics. All of these things are bringing about negativity."

Nixon estimates he's already sold around 2,000 copies of the book through OtisNixon.com, Amazon.com and selected Borders stores. The price at OtisNixon.com is $14.99 or $19.99 if autographed.

Nixon geared the book toward helping those who struggle with the same issues that nearly destroyed him.

"It's going to open some eyes," Nixon said. "I never, ever thought I'd write a book. This is my life, put out in front of me. It was very rewarding to be able to look back. Touching lives by sharing my story... that's what I wanted to do with it."

In an effort to expose the book to a wider audience, Nixon has planned signings in all the major and minor league cities in which he played. He also has several high-profile television appearances scheduled, including Larry King Live on CNN. In "Keeping it Real," he compares life to a chair, its four legs represented by finances, spirituality, health and family.

"You take away any one of those things," he said, "and it will rock your world."

Nixon, who was assisted by a ghost writer, has designs on a followup, which he will gear toward children. For now, his focus will remain on his debut effort.

"A lot of detail went into it," Nixon said. "It was a long and tedious thing. You keep going back and forth. It showed my track record for my career, the things I did. It's not all negative, but there are a lot of stories in here that have never been told - on or off the field. It took a lot to pull this out of me, to expose a lot of myself, to talk about the things I talk about. It's going to make people say, 'Wow.'"

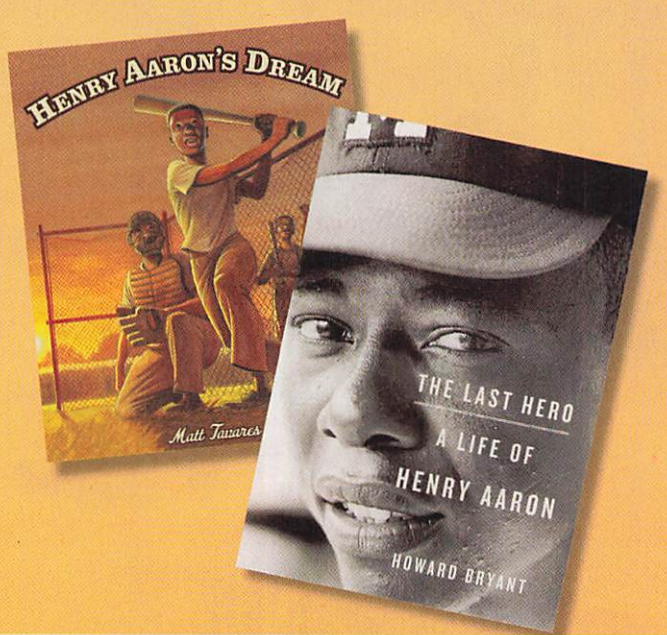
- BRIAN KNAPP

...OR THREE

TWO MORE BOOKS that might interest Braves fans are about Hank Aaron.

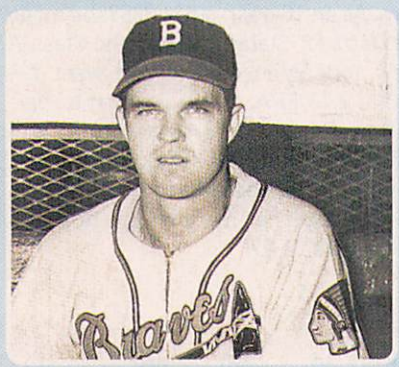
"Henry Aaron's Dream" by Matt Tavares, author and illustrator, is a children's book that deals with Aaron's youth when he played on the sandlots of segregated Mobile, Ala., and only dreamed that someday he could be a big leaguer, something denied black players at that time. It lists for $16.99 but is selling at Amazon.com for $11.55.

"The Last Hero: A Life of Henry Aaron," by Howard Bryant, a writer at ESPN.com, is due to be published May 11, but can be pre-ordered now at Amazon.com for $19.77.



KNOW YOUR BRAVES HALL OF FAME

IN A UNIQUE TWIST of fate, perhaps the best trade ever consummated by the Braves took place Aug. 29, 1951, when one future Braves Hall of Famer was traded for another. That's the day the Boston Braves sent Johnny Sain to the Yankees in exchange for Lou Burdette and $50,000. Burdette, a relative unknown at the time, went on to win 203 games in his major league career, 179 of them as one of the greatest righthanders in Braves history. His biggest accomplishment was pitching three complete-game victories over the vaunted Yankees in the 1957 World Series to win MVP honors.

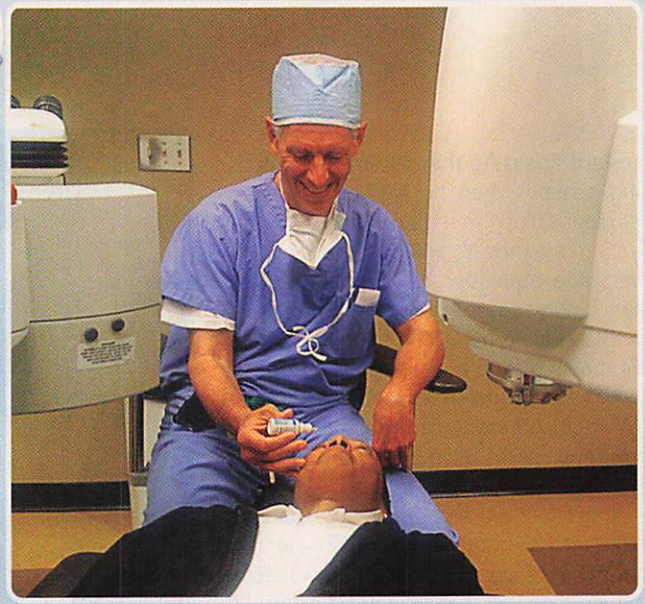


Sain (above) - of "Spahn & Sain and Pray for Rain" fame - was past his prime when the deal was made, though he did go on to have short success with the Yankees as a reliever.

Burdette (above) was inducted to the Braves Hall of Fame in 2001, and Sain followed in 2002.

HOW DO THEY DO THAT?

CORRECT PLAYERS' VISION



HITTING A 95 MILE-PER-HOUR FASTBALL is one of the world's most visually demanding tasks. Baseball players with vision problems once had to wear contact lenses or glasses - or retire. Now they have an option.

LASIK surgery, a procedure in which a precise laser sculpts a new curvature to the eye's cornea, has improved the sight of numerous major leaguers. While non-athletes have this surgery as well, Atlanta-based ophthalmologist Dr. Alan Kozarsky (above) says there are some details performed differently for baseball players than on other patients.

Kozarksy, who has worked on Brian McCann and other Braves players, prefers using wavefront-guided custom LASIK. His program is the same one used by NASA for astronauts that require visual correction.

"Particularly for a professional athlete, a custom wavefront treatment has obvious advantages – for playing during the day, playing at night – for the best performance vision that you can get," said Kozarsky.

The wavefront-guided technique maps the visual system in hundreds of locations on the eye, and then applies a non-uniform custom treatment to each location. This method comes the closest to restoring perfect natural vision.

"It's basically shaping the cornea into its own correcting contact lens without a contact lens," said Kozarsky. "You're changing the shape of the clear outside cornea of the eye so that the eye is self-correcting."

LASIK makes sense for baseball players who experience discomfort with contact lenses, and prefer not to wear them while performing. Kozarsky described another situation that makes the surgery beneficial.

"Players may notice blink-to-blink variation in their vision when wearing contact lenses. Depending on when a pitch is coming, and where they are in blinking, the movement of the contact lenses - which is normal and tolerated by somebody else - can be an impairment, as far as batting is concerned."

- STEVE FALL

MAJOR MOVES

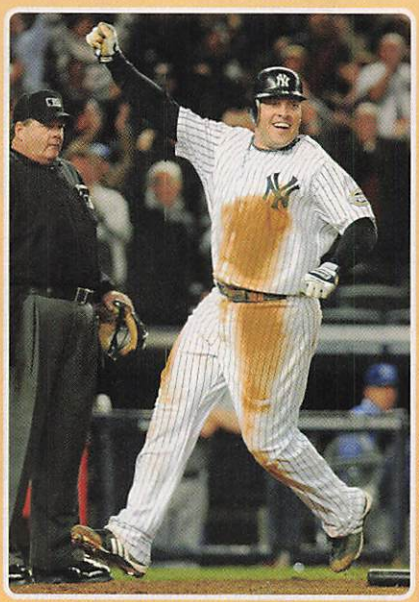
FRANK WREN TOOK MAJOR STEPS toward finalizing the roster for the coming season when he signed free agent slugger **Troy Glaus** and traded **Javier Vazquez** to the Yankees in exchange for versatile outfielder **Melky Cabrera** and two highly regarded pitching prospects.

Glaus is coming off a lost season with St. Louis due to a shoulder injury, but is now healthy and should provide a powerful right-handed bat, probably for the cleanup spot in the order, between **Chipper Jones** and **Brian McCann**.

In his last full season in 2008, Glaus hit .270 with 27 homers and 99 RBIs, leading all major league third basemen in fielding percentage (.982) and in fewest errors (7). He will play first base for Atlanta. For more on Glaus, see pages 24-27.

The Braves acquired Cabrera from the Yankees, along with minor-league pitching prospects **Mike Dunn** and **Arodys Vizcaino**, and cash considerations in exchange for Vazquez and lefty reliever **Boone Logan**.

Cabrera, 25, hit .274 with 13 home runs and 68 RBIs for the World Series champions in 2009. On Aug. 2, he became just the 11th player in Yankees history to hit for the "cycle" with a single, double, triple and home run in the same game. Over the last four seasons, Cabrera ranked third in the American League and tied for seventh in the majors with 38 outfield assists. His .990 fielding percentage since 2006 ranks tied for ninth among all major league outfielders with at least 500 games started. During his time with the Yankees, Cabrera started 330 games in center field, 149 in left field and 27 in right field.



JOHN DUNN / NEWSDAY / MCT

New utilityman Eric Hinske (details below and on page 26) can play first and third, as well as left and right, and has been on the last three AL teams in the World Series.

Dunn, a 24-year-old lefthander, pitched in four games for the Yankees in 2009. In the Arizona Fall League, opponents batted just .182 against him. He's expected to be a strong candidate for a spot in the Atlanta bullpen this spring.

Vizcaino was considered one of the top pitching prospects in the Yankees' system. As an 18-year-old in 2009, he made 10 starts for Staten Island of the Class-A New York Penn League and went 2-4 with a 2.13 ERA, a .211 opponents' batting average, and 52 strikeouts in 42.1 innings pitched. He allowed just two home runs all season and limited right-handed hitters to a .169 average. For more on this deal and the players involved, see pages 28-29.

GLAUS' MAJOR LEAGUE RECORD

YEAR	TEAM	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	AVG	OBP	SLG
1998	Anaheim	48	165	19	36	9	0	1	23	15	51	.218	.280	.291
1999	Anaheim	154	551	85	132	29	0	29	79	71	143	.240	.331	.450
2000	Anaheim	159	563	120	160	37	1	47	102	112	163	.284	.404	.604
2001	Anaheim	161	588	100	147	38	2	41	108	107	158	.250	.367	.531
2002	Anaheim	156	569	99	142	24	1	30	111	88	144	.250	.352	.453
2003	Anaheim	91	319	53	79	17	2	16	50	46	73	.248	.343	.464
2004	Anaheim	58	207	47	52	11	1	18	42	31	52	.251	.355	.575
2005	Arizona	149	538	78	139	29	1	37	97	84	145	.258	.363	.522
2006	Toronto	153	540	105	136	27	0	38	104	86	134	.252	.355	.513
2007	Toronto	115	385	60	101	19	1	20	62	61	102	.262	.366	.473
2008	St. Louis	151	544	69	147	33	1	27	99	87	104	.270	.372	.483
2009	St. Louis	14	29	2	5	2	0	0	2	3	8	.172	.250	.241
TOTALS		1,409	4,998	837	1,276	275	10	304	879	791	1,277	.255	.359	.497

CORNERMAN

Eric Hinske, experienced at first base, third base, left field and right field, signed a one-year contract with the Braves. Hinske, 32, hit .242 with eight homers and an on-base percentage of .780 in 190 at-bats with the Pittsburgh Pirates and Yankees last season. He was on the American League teams that competed in the World Series for the past three seasons. With the Rays in 2008, he started 115 games, including 84 as an outfielder. For more on Hinske, see page 26. Outfielder **Brandon Jones** was designated for assignment to make room for Hinske on the 40-man roster.

CONTRACT STATUS

Peter Moylan is the only Braves player who filed for salary arbitration by the Jan. 15 deadline. His representative and the Braves will continue to attempt to agree on a contract before going to an arbitration hearing. Salary figures were to be exchanged between the two sides Jan. 20,

and formal hearings will be scheduled from Feb. 1-21.

Newly acquired outfielder **Melky Cabrera** avoided arbitration and accepted a one-year contract.

NON-ROSTER INVITEES

The Braves signed seven players to minor-league contracts with non-roster invitations to spring training. The list includes left-handed pitcher **Mariano Gomez**, catchers **Orlando Mercado** and **J.C. Boscan**, infielder **Joe Thurston** and outfielders **Brent Clevlen** and **Mitch Jones**. They join right-handed pitcher **Scott Proctor**, who signed in November.

Jones, 31, spent the past four seasons with the Dodgers organization. His 35 homers led all of Triple A in '09, and he was named to the 10-man Topps Triple-A All-Star team.

Gomez, 27, spent the 2009 season with Triple-A Gwinnett, where he compiled an 8-4 record with a 1.99 ERA in 47 games. He converted all eight of his save opportunities.

Clevlen, 26, spent the last eight seasons with the Detroit Tigers' organization.

Thurston, 30, hit .225 with one home run and drove in 25 runs in 124 games last season with St. Louis.

40-MAN ROSTER

PITCHERS (24):

Juan Abreu, Manny Acosta, Jesse Chavez, Kyle Cofield, Mike Dunn (L), Tommy Hanson, Tim Hudson, Lee Hyde (L), Jair Jurrjens, Kenshin Kawakami, Derek Lowe, Jeff Lyman, Steve Marek, Kris Medlen, Peter Moylan, Eric O'Flaherty (L), Jose Ortegano (L), James Parr, Todd Redmond, Jo-Jo Reyes (L), Takashi Saito, Luis Valdez, Jonny Venters (L), Billy Wagner (L).

CATCHERS (3):

Brian McCann, David Ross, Clint Sammons.

INFIELDERS (7):

Brooks Conrad, Yunel Escobar, Troy Glaus, Diory Hernandez, Omar Infante, Chipper Jones, Martin Prado.

OUTFIELDERS (6):

Gregor Blanco, Melky Cabrera, Matt Diaz, Eric Hinske, Nate McLouth, Jordan Schafer.

SHORT HOPS

- Bullpen coach **Eddie Perez** was fired as manager by the Zulia Eagles during the Venezuelan Winter League playoffs.

FRANK WREN
GENERAL MANAGER

OUR LINEUP IS STRONGER WITH GLAUS AT CLEANUP

ONE OF THE AREAS we wanted to improve was the middle of the lineup and adding some right-handed power. In the case of Troy Glaus, historically, when he's played every day, he's been able to hit about 30 home runs and drive in close to 100 runs. If he can do that for us, it really makes the lineup better.

He was healthy at the end of last season. This was more of a traumatic injury - it came from diving for a ball on the turf in Toronto. He jammed his shoulder and had rotator cuff and labrum surgery. But he was fine in August and September.

It's not the type of injury you worry much about being chronic. He passed physicals with our doctors in December and January and got a clean bill of health.

We feel he'll be fine, with the added bonus that he won't be making the long throws from third base, so there will be less wear and tear on his shoulder. He has great hands, and was an outstanding third baseman. Over the course of the spring, he'll have plenty of time to get acclimated to playing first base.

It's probably not as important now to have a right-handed bat as it was when we had (lefties) Jordan Schafer, Garrett Anderson, Kelly Johnson and Casey Kotchman in the lineup. But I think what this does is separate Chipper and McCann and makes it more difficult for managers to set up their pitching to try and neutralize Chipper, Glaus and McCann. Pitchers will have to work harder to get through the middle of the lineup.

Melky Cabrera is a perfect fit for our club. He has the versatility to play every day - and every day at a different outfield position. He can give us a platoon at all three, and Bobby can utilize him in a lot of ways.

> "THE DOCTOR TOLD (McLOUTH) HE NEEDED CONTACTS. THAT VALIDATED WHAT WE WERE SEEING BUT DIDN'T KNOW WHY."

He can match up with Diaz, who's earned playing time, and McLouth, who we feel will bounce back and be healthy like in his All-Star year of 2008.

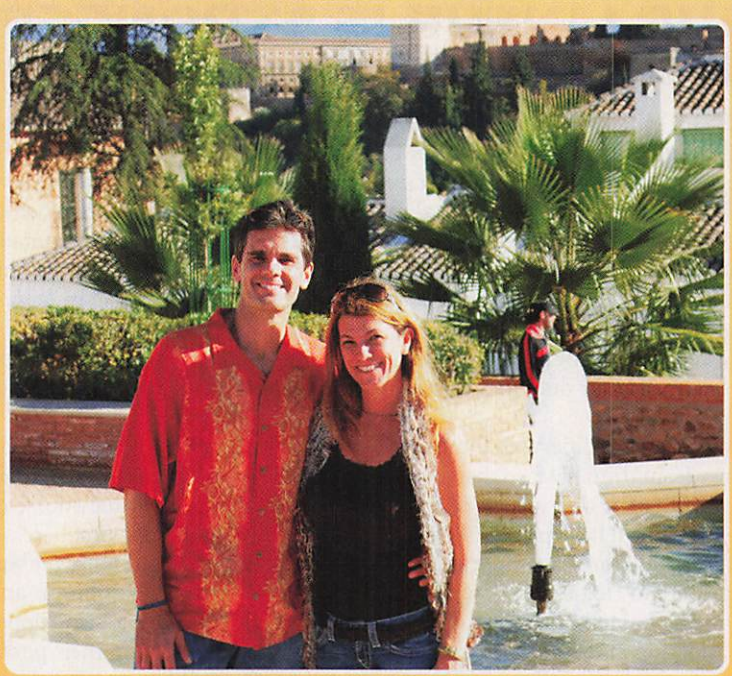
There were two things bothering McLouth at the end of last season. The hamstring was nagging and didn't allow him to be explosive, and we think his vision affected him in September. He didn't know it until after the fact that he needed contacts, but there were signs he wasn't seeing the ball real well in September.

He was driving home to Michigan after the season and noticed he wasn't seeing the road signs as well as he should. He made an appointment, and the doctor told him he needed contacts. That validated what we were seeing but didn't know why. This should help him, and he's had the entire off-season to get used to them.

Mike Dunn is a power lefty we saw in the Arizona Fall League, where he had 20 strikeouts in 10 innings and dominated in the all-star game. He fits our club real well. And Arodys Vizcaino is an outstanding pitching prospect that our people compare to Julio Teheran. This really gives us quality young pitching for the future with those two and guys like Randall Delgado, Mike Minor, Craig Kimbrel...

Eric Hinske upgrades our bench. He's a former Rookie of the Year (2002 with Toronto) that hit 20 home runs a couple of years ago (2008 with Tampa Bay). He hit .300 as a pinch-hitter last year and can play all four corners. He can give a lot of guys a break and still keep a power bat in the lineup, and he's a top pinch-hitter.

For the most part, we're done, unless opportunities present themselves to make us better. But overall, we're ready to go to spring training.



SPECIAL

New Fox Sports South and SportSouth broadcaster Chip Caray, with his wife Susan, on their off-season vacation in Spain.

CHIP'S BACK

CHIP CARAY landed on his feet. Three weeks after parting ways with Turner Sports, he was hired as Braves play-by-play man on Fox Sports South and SportSouth. Caray, 44, replaces **Jon "Boog" Sciambi**, who left after last season to work for ESPN. He will be paired for 100-plus games on Fox Sports South and SportSouth with analyst **Joe Simpson**. That will be more than twice as many Braves games as he worked last year for Turner-owned Peachtree TV.

Caray and his wife **Susan** took an 11-day off-season vacation to Spain. The Carays, including daughter **Summerlyn**, twin sons **Christopher** and **Stefan**, and 14-month old **Tristan** were home for Christmas in Maitland, Fla., not far from the Braves' spring training headquarters.

SKIP'S A FINALIST

The late **Skip Caray**, a Braves Hall of Famer, is one of 10 finalists for the **Ford C. Frick** Award for excellence in baseball broadcasting. The winner will be announced Feb. 1 and honored during the July 23-26 Hall of Fame induction weekend in Cooperstown, N.Y. Other finalists are **Billy Berroa**, **Tom Cheek**, **Jacques Doucet**, **Lanny Frattare**, **Graham McNamee**, **Jon Miller**, **Joe Nuxhall**, **Herb Score** and **Dave Van Horne**. Only Miller (Giants and ESPN) and Van Horne (Marlins) are active. Cheek, Doucet and Nuxhall gained the finals by online fan voting. Final voting is conducted by a 20-member electorate that includes 15 former Frick winners.

WINTER FEAST

Braves radio broadcaster **Jim Powell** will emcee the annual Braves 400 Fan Club Gameboree, and former Yankees second base great **Bobby Richardson**, the MVP of the 1960 World Series, will attend to receive the **Luke Appling** Nostalgia Award.

Open to the public, the banquet is scheduled Saturday, Feb. 13, at the Marriott Perimeter Center, located near I-285 and Georgia 400, off Hammond Drive at 246 Perimeter Center Parkway. The evening begins with a reception and silent auction benefiting the **Phil Niekro** Scholarship Fund at 5:30 p.m., followed by dinner and the program at 7 p.m.

Jason Heyward will receive the **Hank Aaron** Award as the Braves' top minor league hitter last season, and several other honors will be distributed, including the Phil Niekro Award to **Craig Kimbrel** as the top pitcher in the Braves' farm system. Mississippi Braves infielder **Greg Creek** will receive the **Bill Lucas** Award for the way he represents the team on and off the field, and Danville's **Paul Runge** will be named the organization's Manager of the Year.

Tickets are $65 each. For information, call (770) 416-4539 or visit braves400.org.

The theme of this year's event is "Great Atlanta Braves Pitching Rotations." Numerous pitching greats will be invited to attend, according to club president **Wayne Coleman**.

ON THE ROAD!

The Braves Community Caravan presented by Academy Sports + Outdoors will take place Jan. 30 through Feb. 11 and will make stops in Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, South Carolina and North Carolina. It's the biggest Braves Caravan ever, with more than 30 stops covering over 3,000 miles leading up to the team's departure for spring training.

At each public visit, the participants will sign free autographs, meet with members of the media, and discuss the 2010 Braves season. Players (to be announced), as well as coaches, former players, broadcasters and front office executives are expected to be on the caravan.

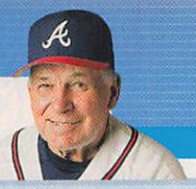
The stops in metro Atlanta will consist of a luncheon and a Q&A session for season ticket holders, followed by a community visit to a local school, hospital or military base, and then an autograph signing at a Publix or Academy Sports + Outdoors location.

In addition, fans will have the opportunity to purchase tickets, including mini-plans that will feature Opening Day.

Sat., Jan 30 | 12-1:30 p.m.
Academy Sports + Outdoors
8610 Eastchase Pkwy.
Montgomery, Ala.

Sat., Jan. 30 | 3-4:30 p.m.
Academy Sports + Outdoors
2325 Bent Creek Rd.
Auburn, Ala. 36830

Sun., Jan. 31 | 4-5:30 p.m.
Academy Sports + Outdoors
4210 Washington Rd.
Evans, Ga. 30809



Mon., Feb. 1 | 4:30 p.m.
Publix Super Market
Highland Plaza
3605 Sandy Plains Rd.
Marietta, Ga.

Tues., Feb. 2 | 4-5:30 p.m.
Academy Sports + Outdoors
1689 Eisenhower Pkwy.
Macon, Ga.

Thurs., Feb. 4 | 4-5:30 p.m.
Academy Sports + Outdoors
2350 Gallatin Pike North
Madison, Tenn.

Fri., Feb. 5 | 4:30 p.m.
Publix Super Market
Eagles Landing
909 Eagles Landing Pkwy.
Stockbridge, Ga.

Sat., Feb. 6 | 2:30-4 p.m.
Academy Sports + Outdoors
2810 John Hawkins Pkwy.
Hoover, Ala.

Mon., Feb. 8 | 4:30 p.m.
Publix Super Market
McGinnis Crossing
1000 Peachtree Industrial Blvd.

Wed., Feb. 10 | 4-5:30 p.m.
Academy Sports + Outdoors
3505 Atlanta Hwy.
Athens, Ga.

Thurs., Feb. 11 | 4-5:30 p.m.
Academy Sports + Outdoors
59 Woodruff Industrial Ln.
Greenville, S.C.

Thurs., Feb. 11 | 4-5:30 p.m.
Academy Sports + Outdoors
100 Peachtree Centre Dr.
Spartanburg, S.C.

Sat., Feb. 13 | 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
Gwinnett Braves Stadium
One Braves Ave.
Lawrenceville, Ga.

MURF STRIKES OUT

The annual **Dale Murphy** Hall of Fame watch ended in disappointment for the 12th straight year. Murphy got 63 votes, one more than a year ago but a dozen fewer votes than he got in 2008 and barely half his total of 116 when he first appeared on the ballot. He finished 14th this year, with 11.7 percent of the vote - 75 percent is required for election. **Fred McGriff** was 11th with 116 votes (21.5 percent) in his first year of eligibility. **Andres Galarraga** was 16th with 22 votes (4.1 percent). Players can remain on the ballot for up to 15 years, as long as they are named on at least five percent of the ballots.

WE HAVE THE HITTING TO BACK THE PITCHING

FRANK WREN had a big job to do this off-season, and I think he's done a great job. Building a team doesn't happen by accident. Fans don't know all the talking that goes into trades and acquisitions. They don't know how much we communicate about the pieces and how they'll fit.

Frank is there to make those tough calls. I've been in that seat, and it's not always fun. For example, we had to let go one of our starters. And it was tough to let Javier Vazquez go, because he pitched excellent and was a great competitor. But we had to let someone go in order to pick up at least one hitter.

By making the trade with the Yankees, we not only got a terrific outfielder in Melky Cabrera, but we got some excellent pitching prospects, Mike Dunn and Arodys Vizcaino, that we're all very excited about. Melky can play all three outfield positions and has a good arm.

Then Frank went about getting a first baseman, and I'm delighted that he was able to get Troy Glaus to fill that spot. I got to know Troy when I managed an all-star team that went to Japan. He's a solid power hitter who can hit home runs. He's always been a run producer, and he has terrific hands.

We think he's going to offer some protection to Chipper (Jones) in our lineup. He will be making the transition to first base, but by the end of spring training, I expect him to be very comfortable. He's a great team guy who will fit in well in our clubhouse.

We've also got Eric Hinske, and he's going to give even more hitting depth to our bench. I'm a big believer in a deep bench, and I like the way ours is shaping up.

> "I MAY SOUND LIKE A BROKEN RECORD TO OUR FANS AND EVEN TO OUR PLAYERS, BUT THIS IS A TEAM THAT CAN WIN."

Our players work out all off-season after they take off a few weeks at the end of the previous season to heal. But most players really start doing baseball work in December, and in January, it wasn't unusual to have hitters down at Turner Field working with our coaches in the batting cages. I know Chipper was in there early in January, and I read in ChopTalk that Jair Jurrjens began throwing in late December and early January.

Our starting rotation will be very solid and has the potential to take us deep into ballgames. I believe our bullpen is also very strong, and our hitters will give the pitchers the support they need.

We all love this time of year. February is an optimistic time. If you can't be an optimist in February, you probably shouldn't be in the game!

But I like our club. We have all the pieces with young players like Tommy Hanson and Kris Medlen, Jurrjens and Martin Prado who are maturing, and veterans who want to win and can show the young guys the ropes.

Every one of them is a professional. They don't need me to motivate them by reminding them it's my last season managing. If they need that, they don't belong in the big leagues. They want to win because they are competitors, and I wouldn't want it any other way.

I'm excited about spring training and about seeing our players come in and our new players join us. And I always enjoy getting to the minor league fields and seeing the players there, too.

We have a ton of talent in our minor league system, and that's one thing I am looking forward to about retiring from managing.

I may sound like a broken record to our fans and even to our players, but this is a team that can win. We're going to do our best to give Braves fans plenty to get excited about this season!

PLAYING PEPPER

DAVID ROSS

POLIYA DIANAT/ ATLANTA BRAVES

David Ross gives a thumbs-up to his first season with the Braves in which he hit .273 with 7 home runs and 20 RBIs in only 128 at-bats.

INTERVIEW BY
PATTY RASMUSSEN

CHOPTALK: You signed with the Braves a year ago knowing you'd be the backup catcher for Brian McCann. How did that work, from your point of view? Did it meet or exceed your expectations?

DAVID ROSS: I think the season exceeded my expectations. As you said, I came to the Braves knowing that my role would be backup, but you don't always know how you're going to be treated. From the get-go, all the coaches, Bobby Cox, and my teammates treated me with respect, and I think I fit in pretty well with the team. From a playing standpoint, it was great backing up Brian, because I have a lot of respect for him and I think we developed a good relationship from the start. We really fed off each other. I was really happy with the amount of playing time I had and was happy with the push we made toward the end of the season, the excitement that was generated, and the expectation of the next season, especially with the top-notch pitching we have.

CT: When McCann was sidelined early in the season with blurry vision, you had an opportunity to play almost every day?

ROSS: Yeah, you know the thing that was good about the timing of Brian having those eye problems was that he had been gone at the World Baseball Classic for so long during spring training that I really got to know the pitching staff. I caught a lot, got a lot of at-bats during the time he was gone, so I was ready to play almost every day when he was out. You know you train to play every day, even if you're a backup, but you don't necessarily think it's going to happen. I think I played 14 out of 15 days during his eye problems, so I was happy when he came back! I'm competitive though and enjoyed getting to play as much as I did. But he's such a good player. He makes such a difference in our team when he's in the lineup. He's easily one of the premier catchers in baseball right now.

CT: Is your approach to catching similar to McCann's?

ROSS: I think we're very similar. We both take a lot of pride in our work, getting to know the pitchers and the hitters. I've enjoyed being around him, getting to know him. He and I clicked pretty quickly. Sometimes there is competition between catchers, but I've never felt that with Brian, in part because I know he's so good. One of the reasons I took this backup job was because it was good for my family, but also I knew Brian was a better catcher than I was. He's got skills and is poised beyond his years and is a leader for this team. I'm glad to get to give him a break every now and then.

CT: How did you like working with the pitching staff?

ROSS: You know this staff was so strong. It was great seeing Javy Vazquez go out there and quietly dominate the hitters. If we had had the second-half lineup in the first half of the season, he would easily have won 20 games. He had a Cy Young season. Jair Jurrjens was great, really solid, and then watching the rookie, Tommy Hanson, come in. He's easily one of the best rookie pitchers I've ever seen. He's like McCann, poised, polished, and confident, but not cocky. There's no arrogance. He's able to come up with a game plan and execute it, tweak it if necessary. It's great to work with guys like that.

CT: When you look at the 2009 season, where do you think the turnaround came?

ROSS: I think moving Martin Prado to the second spot was the missing link in the lineup. He did so much for us there. He got on base and made stuff happen. You just know these guys, like Nate McLouth and Prado, and Yunel Escobar, who has put up some good career numbers, are going to pick up where they left off. Chipper Jones had an off year for Chipper, but I can't help but be excited about next season. It's Bobby's last year, and that's only adding fuel to the fire. I know the Braves are trying to win. I've been on teams that have given up before the season's even started. But when an organization is building, it makes you want to work even harder.

> "I CAN'T HELP BUT BE EXCITED ABOUT NEXT SEASON. IT'S BOBBY'S LAST YEAR, AND THAT'S ONLY ADDING FUEL TO THE FIRE."

CT: Speaking of working, when did you start your off-season workouts?

ROSS: I start a little earlier than some folks, because you don't want to lose what you worked so hard to create. I usually take about two weeks off and then start on strength training. I try to go in every day, but it usually works out to more like three times a week of strength and the other two days of cardio, because there's always something going on with one of our kids.

This year, I'm feeling the pressure, though, because of Club Diesel.

CT: Club Diesel? What's that?

ROSS: At the end of the season, I was talking to the strength and conditioning coach (Phil Falco) and saying, "Let's have this club - we'll call it Club Diesel. You have to do a certain number of situps and stuff, and we'll have t-shirts." He was for it, so we're going to set it up. Guys have been texting me saying, "I'm in Club Diesel, man!" So, I know I'm going to have to be in shape, since I'm the one who started it!

CT: What are the Club Diesel requirements?

ROSS: We haven't decided all that just yet. Falco's gonna call me, and we'll figure it all out. Probably a certain number of situps in under a minute, a shuttle run in under a minute, losing a certain percentage of body fat, that sort of thing. When you accomplish three of five things, you get the t-shirt.

CT: What does the Club Diesel logo look like?

ROSS: Still working on that, too, but I think it's gonna be like the grill of a semi-truck with a Braves "A" in it, with the barbell as the crossbar in the "A," something like that. It's going to be great, and guys are excited about it. But I'm definitely feeling the pressure to make sure I'm in shape!

CT: Has life changed much since you and your wife, Hyla, had your second child (son Cole, 7 months.)?

ROSS: It actually has! I shouldn't say this, but it's a lot more work for me! (Laughing) During the season, I'll play with the kids in the morning but leave for the park by 2 o'clock, and when I get home, they're in bed. Now we're feeding one child while the other is playing, but I'm having a blast. I love getting to be more of a dad. I take my daughter, Landri (age 3), to school in the morning.

CT: Have you done much this off-season? Any trips?

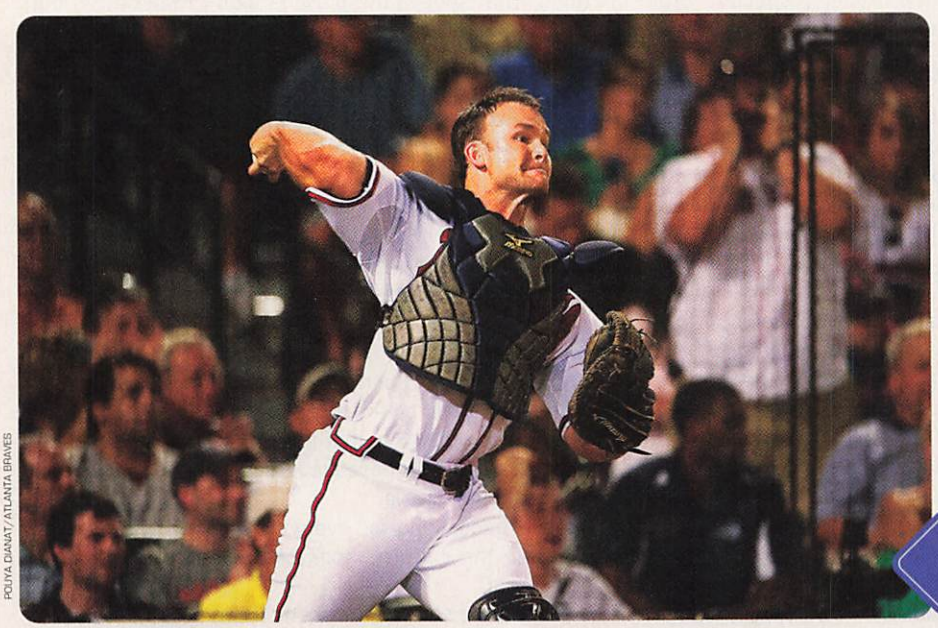
ROSS: No, we've stayed pretty low key this year. We spent Thanksgiving at the beach, but we're trying to not travel much. I'm really spending my time focusing on just being a dad. Our family time has become much more important to us since having children. We watch a lot of movies. I can't tell you how many times I've watched Sleeping Beauty or Tinkerbell! Cole is trying to crawl. He always wants to be on the floor, but when he gets there, he can't do anything! I'm pretty sure that any day now he'll be all over the place.

POLIYA DANAT/ATLANTA BRAVES

But he's a happy guy, smiles all the time. He's like me. Just feed me, and I'll be happy. I was talking to my wife, saying it's hard to believe that the off-season is almost over. We had something every weekend in December. The time flies by.

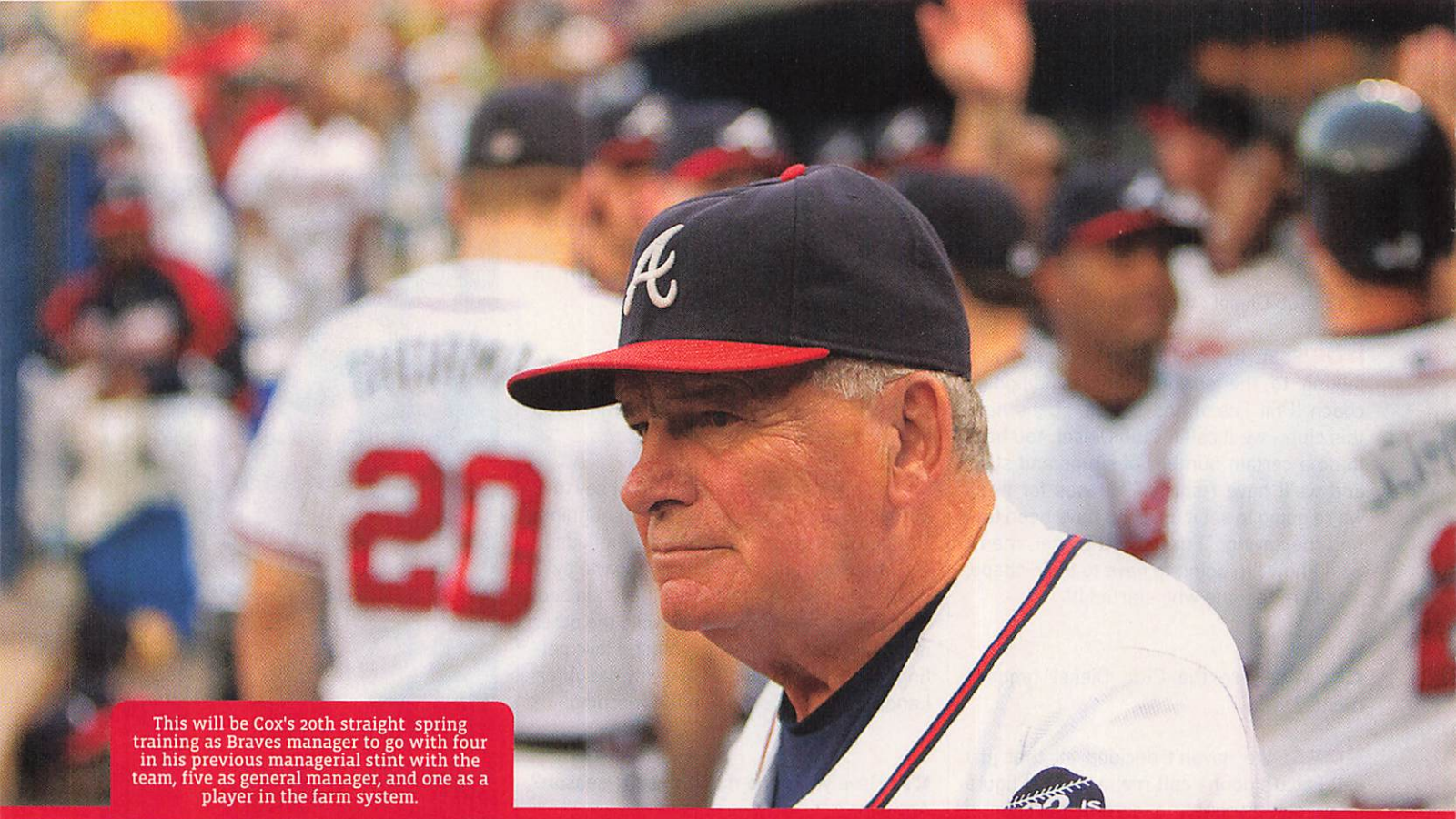
CT: Do you get antsy for baseball to start?

ROSS: That usually doesn't happen for me until after the first of the year, because that's when I start doing baseball stuff, like hitting and throwing. I start doing that in January and work out two to three weeks, getting my arms stronger, my hands ready. Around the beginning of February is when I'll get itching to be at spring training, and I'm usually a little nervous about getting started. It's just going back, the newness of what you're doing. You have to get used to a new routine. Last year, I was getting used to a new team, but this year, it will probably be a little easier.



POLIYA DANAT/ATLANTA BRAVES

Ross, a 32-year-old native of Bainbridge, Ga., went to college at Auburn and Florida and played for both schools in the College World Series.



This will be Cox's 20th straight spring training as Braves manager to go with four in his previous managerial stint with the team, five as general manager, and one as a player in the farm system.

PHOTOS: ATLANTA BRAVES

FIRST IN A SERIES

#6 THE FINAL SEASON | FAREWELL TOUR

When Pitchers And Catchers Report, It Begins A Season-Long Series of "Lasts" For Cox

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN

LET THE "FINAL SEASON" BEGIN - and with all the proper respect Bobby Cox has earned throughout his remarkable managerial career.

Braves pitchers and catchers report to ESPN Wide World of Sports Feb. 19, and it's the last time they'll do so with #6 in charge. From then on, nearly everything Cox does for the next eight months will be scrutinized and documented like never before, because the entire season will be a long series of "lasts" that will be intensely reported by the media and undoubtedly marked by special recognition and honors in every city.

Managers don't usually depart this way. Typically, they are fired, something that's only happened once to Cox in 28 previous seasons as a big league manager. But due to the unprecedented success he has enjoyed, Cox, 68, is making a rare exit from his volatile profession, writing his own ticket into retirement - at least from managing.

The Braves were in New York last September when Cox made the official announcement that 2010 would be his last season as manager. At the time, he was in the midst of attempting to guide his team into the wild card berth in the 2009 playoffs.

There's little doubt that spring training 2010 and the unusual scrutiny that will follow him this year were the furthest things from his mind. That spot in the playoffs didn't materialize, but now it's February, and Cox's personal "farewell tour" is about to commence, one that everyone associated with the Braves hopes will extend very deep into October.

Cox insists that he is going into his final season of managing just as he always has, with the same approach, the same optimistic outlook.

"I feel as though the pressure is off me," he said. "I made the announcement, and now I can look ahead, like I always have. We're going to give it our best shot for one more year. I'll put everything I have into this season, and then I'll be ready to move on."

Of course, he won't be moving far. He has a five-year contract to remain with the organization as a consultant. Nevertheless, the end of this season will be the end of an era in Braves history.

"It still hasn't really sunk in, that this is my final spring training," said Cox. "It's probably because I know I'll still be involved, and that's a good thing for me."

It's probably a good thing for everyone involved with Braves baseball. Imagine the culture shock of Braves spring training without Cox present!

He's been a fixture on the spring scene for the past 20 consec-

utive years as manager, since 1991. He has another 10 years of Braves tenure - his first stint as manager from 1978 until 1981, five years as Braves general manager from 1986 until 1990, and he was a player in the farm system in the spring of 1967.

Cox's most memorable spring training was 1968, after the Braves traded him to the Yankees. The Yanks were in decline at the time, but their mystique was present, as was the legendary Mickey Mantle, who was at the end of his career. Cox won the starting job at third base, though he held it for only one season before bad knees forced him to any early retirement as a player, and he thrilled at playing against such greats as Al Kaline (Tigers), Brooks Robinson (Orioles), and Boog Powell (Orioles).

Cox has often said that other than the post-season, spring training is his favorite time of the baseball year.

"Everyone's a winner in February," he said. "Everyone is optimistic, especially if you're coming off a good season the year before. It's exciting and fun to see everyone again. I've always loved spring training."

Cox was one of the most sought after interviews in December at the winter meetings in Indianapolis, with the top question invariably being about his decision to step away from managing after the 2010 season, something he says he'd been thinking about for several years.

"I had to make the decision at some point," he said. "The end of this season seemed like the right time to do it. I knew that once it was announced, there wasn't any looking back."

There are plenty of players, announcers and friends that have begun looking back at Cox's spring trainings through the years. Remarkably, Chipper Jones has never had any major league manager except Cox, and says it's difficult to imagine the spring season without seeing the familiar #6 in the dugout, clapping his hands, saying, "Let's go, guys!" at the start of workouts.

"He's always trusted his players, and I think that's what we appreciate most about him," said Jones. "He trusts you to be a man, be a professional, to get your work done. And he understands that everyone has a different way of doing that. He might ask me how many at-bats I need that day, whether it's two or three, or even more. He listens to me. Guys will do just about anything for a manager who treats them that way."

Jair Jurrjens has only had two major league managers, both of the "old school" variety. That's Cox and Detroit manager Jim Leyland.

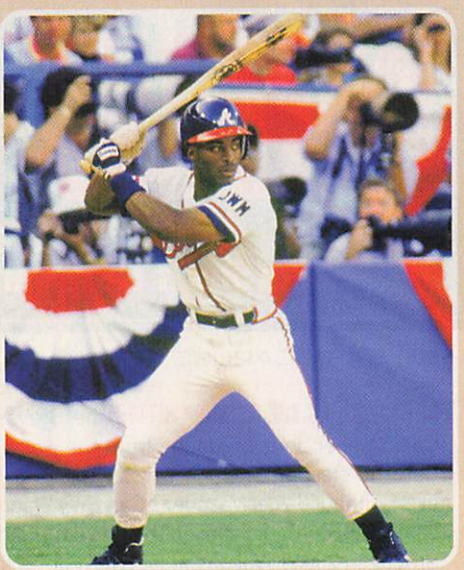
"I always say I was lucky, having (Leyland) and now having Bobby (Cox)," said Jurrjens. "They are the same. They just want you to come to the stadium, do your work and play 100 percent."

As for talking about Cox's last spring training and season, Jurrjens said, "It's better not to think about it. All I can say is, a manager like him, you always want to give him all you can."

And this is the last chance to do it.

NEXT MONTH: PART TWO.

Ron Gant Found Out The Hard Way That Cox Is A Man To Be Trusted



OUTFIELDER TURNED BROADCASTER Ron Gant admitted he was "hit pretty hard" when he heard the announcement that Bobby Cox intended to retire after the 2010 season. The news caused Gant to immediately start looking back in his memories of seasons with the Braves and with Cox in particular.

"He's always been there," said Gant. "It's Bobby. He's a Braves icon."

STORIES OF BOBBY

Gant was drafted by Atlanta in 1983, while Cox was managing the Toronto Blue Jays after Braves owner Ted Turner fired him following the 1981 season. Cox re-joined the Braves as the general manager late in 1985, when Gant was working his way through the minor league system. It was while Gant was still in the minors that he said he began to see how special Cox was.

"He knew his players," said Gant. "He'd come to wherever you were at the time and know how you were doing, the whole scouting report. It built up trust."

"Trust" was a crucial aspect for Gant in the spring of 1989, when he received the news that he was being sent down to the minor leagues after spring training.

Gant, then a second baseman, made his major league debut as a September callup in 1987, and in 1988, his first full season in the majors, he hit .259 with 19 home runs, 60 RBIs and 19 steals. The future looked bright. He even finished fourth in the NL Rookie-of-the-Year voting.

But Cox, as GM, and the Braves didn't think Gant's future was in the infield, where he'd played since being drafted in the fourth round (100th overall player) in 1983. A major decision was made to send him all the way back to Class-A Sumter to learn to play the outfield.

"Bobby came to me to tell me they were going to send me down to learn to play the outfield," recalled Gant. "I kept telling him, 'I can learn to play up here,' but Bobby said, 'We know you can learn, but we think it's going to be better for you in the long run if you go down to learn.' I knew Bobby by this time, and I knew he had my best interests at heart. I trusted him and went down."

The results weren't noticeable at first. Gant came back to the majors at mid-season and hit just .177 in 75 games. By the 1990 season, he felt at home in the outfield, though, and hit a career-high .303 and made the rare 30/30 club with 32 home runs and 33 steals. He never returned to the infield, hit 321 career home runs, and made two NL All-Star teams in an excellent 16-year career.

Gant also credits Cox with creating a change in atmosphere at spring training 1991 after he'd taken on the field manager role in mid-season 1990. The Braves' historic "Worst To First" season ensued, launching the streak of 14 straight division titles.

"Everything became more energetic and positive," said Gant. "We players knew that we had the right guy in that spot."

- PATTY RASMUSSEN

Beautiful Champion Stadium at ESPN Wide World of Sports.

NEW BEGINNING

Players Convene In Florida This Month To See If They Can Regenerate Last Year's Second-Half Success

BY GARY CARUSO

PHOTOS: DISNEY

IS TROY GLAUS THE CLEANUP HITTER the Braves were searching for? Can Chipper Jones rebound from the worst season of his career? Can the starting pitching possibly be even better than last year, even without Javier Vazquez? Can Billy Wagner give the Braves the type of "automatic" closer they haven't had since John Smoltz in 2004? Will Jason Heyward be so impressive at age 20 that the Braves will be forced to keep him with the big club?

These questions - and more - begin to be answered Feb. 19 when pitchers and catchers report to ESPN Wide World of Sports in Kissimmee to officially launch Bobby Cox's last spring training as manager.

The team that hasn't been to the playoffs since 2005 hopes it can quickly find the magic that resulted in a blistering second-half run that fell just short of gaining the National League wild card berth last year. From June 28-Sept. 28, the Braves were 52-30 over 82 games, one more than half the season. That was a .634 pace that would translate to 103 wins over a full schedule.

It was an impressive run, to say the least, especially considering its length. The club gained considerable confidence, and the belief that if it can play that well for half a season, it ought to be able to do it for a full season. Given reasonably good health, that's exactly what it expects to do this year with what should be a lineup with improved and more consistent run producing potential, and pitching that could be as good or better than it was a year ago when the Atlanta rotation led baseball with 99 quality starts.

Gone is Javier Vazquez, the ace of last season when he had a legitimate Cy Young quality performance (15-10, 2.87). Nevertheless, the rotation could be even better without him. Sound far-fetched? Not really, not if Derek Lowe (15-10, 4.67) bounces back from a sub-par season and young lions Jair Jurrjens (14-10, 2.60) and Tommy Hanson (11-4, 2.89) improve, as most 24-year-olds do, and Tim Hudson (2-1, 3.61) and Kenshin Kawakami (7-12, 3.86) pitch as expected.

Then there's the bullpen, which lost Rafael Soriano and Mike Gonzalez, its two best closers, but replaced them with Wagner (1-1, 1.72 for the Mets and Red Sox) and Takashi Saito (3-3, 2.43 for Boston), potentially a 1-2 punch that's as good as any in the game. Wagner has 385 career saves and appeared late last season to be fully recovered from elbow surgery in September 2008. A lefty clos-

er, he should be particularly handy in last-inning situations against the powerful left-handed bats of the two-time-defending NL champion Phillies.

Saito, a righty, is only one year removed from being a near-automatic closer for the Dodgers, for whom he saved 81 games in 91 chances from 2006-08.

Then there's returning Australian sidewinder Peter Moylan (6-2, 2.84), who appeared in a franchise-record 87 games last year and didn't give up a single home run.

Pitching is still the name of the game, and the Braves are well-stocked with it at a time when there seems to be far too little of it to go around among other clubs.

Atlanta's big problem last year, mainly in the first half, was inconsistent run production. That seemed to change dramatically when Martin Prado became the regular second baseman June 25 - only three days before the 52-30 burst began. No one on the team sees that as a coincidence. His .307 average (with 11 home runs and 49 RBIs) ranked second on the team to outfielder Matt Diaz (.313), and he was a dramatic sparkplug in the No. 2 slot in the batting order.

The Braves hope that Glaus is the missing link - a right-handed power presence in the cleanup spot that should help Jones and Brian McCann see better pitches to hit. Glaus (see pages 24-26) is one of the game's best power hitters but, at age 33, has to learn to play first base and must bounce back from a lost season caused by a shoulder injury and surgery.

KEY DATES

Feb. 1-13
Pitchers' Early Throwing @ Turner Field

Feb. 19
Pitchers & Catchers Report To Florida

Feb. 20
First Workout, Pitchers & Catchers

Feb. 22
Remainder Of Players Report To Florida

Feb. 23
First Full-Squad Workout

March 2
First Exhibition Game
Mets @ Port St. Lucie (1:10 p.m.)

March 3
Home Exhibition Opener
Mets @ Champion Stadium (1:05 p.m.)

April 5
Opening Day
Cubs @ Turner Field (4 p.m.)

Jones, who hit only .264 (18 homers, 71 RBIs), exactly 100 points less than in 2008 when he won the NL batting title, believes he was bogged down by a mechanical problem in his swing and has vowed to bounce back with a vengeance in an effort to help the only manager he's ever played for go out with a successful season.

McCann, coming off a fourth straight All-Star season and his third Silver Slugger, could be even better than his .281/21/94 season if his off-season Lasik surgery corrected the vision issue that plagued him last April and caused him to wear glasses most of the year.

Just as Prado and McCann, both 26, should be expected to improve, the same goes for Yunel Escobar, 27, who really came into his own last year in the field and at the plate, developing into one of the league's best shortstops with strong run producing potential (.299/14/76).

That leaves the outfield, an unsettled situation early last year that seems to be stronger this year, mainly due to the addition of versatile Melky Cabrera (.274/13/68 with the Yankees) and the year-long presence of Nate McLouth (.256/20/70), now wearing contact lenses to correct a vision problem that dragged his production late last year.

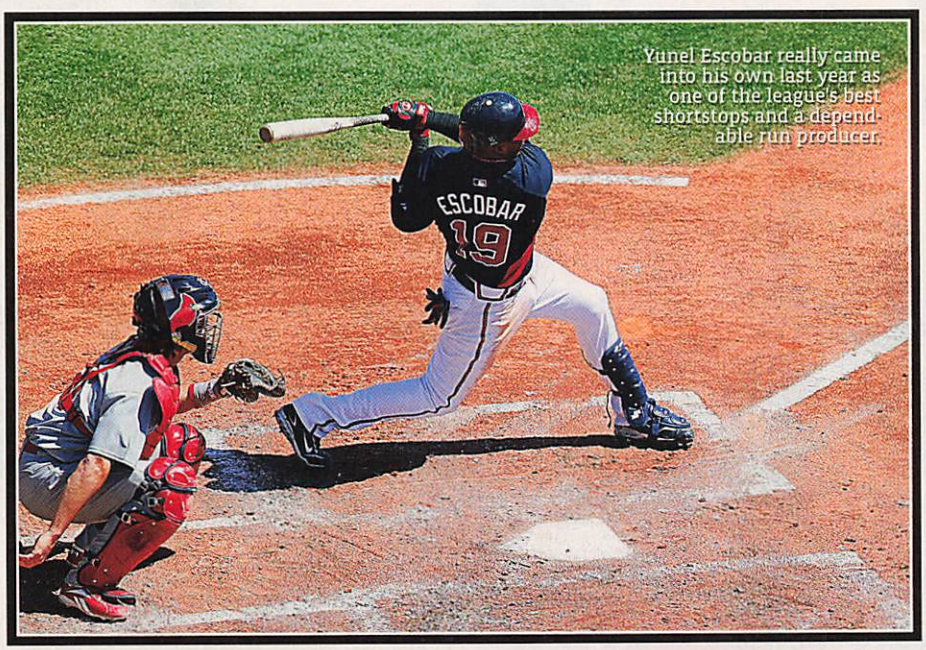
Diaz (13 home runs and 58 RBIs in 371 at-bats) should be the other regular outfielder. But Jason Heyward, last year's Minor League Player of the Year, could add an exciting power bat to the mix with a strong spring training, even though he's only 20 years old.

With backup catcher David Ross, all-around super utilityman Omar Infante, and newly acquired infielder/outfielder Eric Hinske, and several other contenders, Cox has the makings of a solid bench, too.

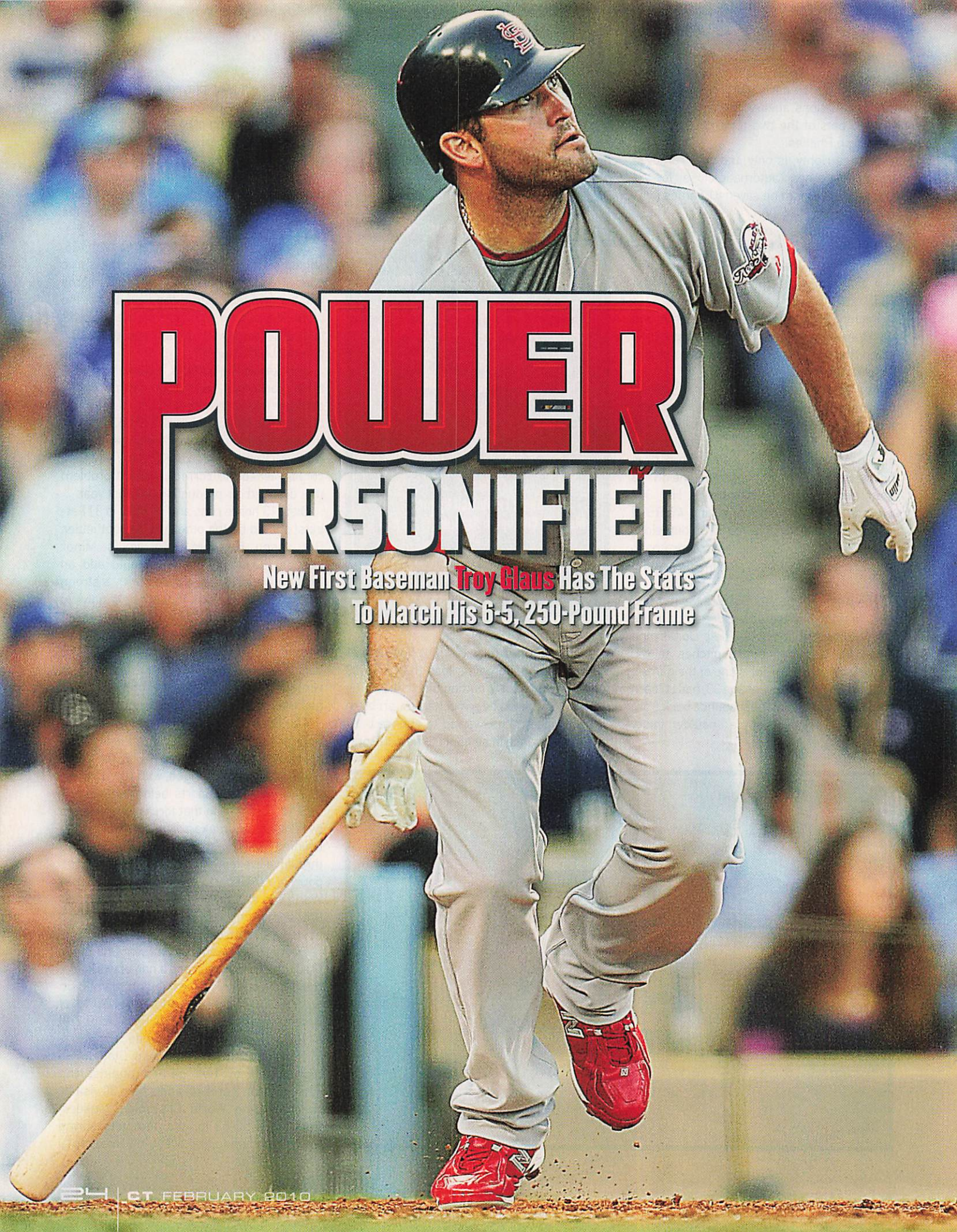
The Braves train at ESPN Wide World of Sports complex, a 220-acre facility that opened in 1997 in Kissimmee, Fla. The name of the facility has changed, with the "Disney" in Wide World of Sports being replaced by "ESPN." Other than that formality and some tweaks that will make a visit to Braves spring training seem somewhat like walking through a live television production, fans who pour into the sports-themed park at Disney World can expect the same first-class stadium and friendly Disney experience that's hosted the team's camp since 1998.

Games are played in 9,500-seat Champion Stadium. After a week and a half of workouts, the Braves play 31 exhibition games in Florida, 16 of them at the Wide World of Sports, followed by two exhibitions (April 2-3) at Turner Field against the White Sox.

The schedule at Champion Stadium is highlighted by two games against the Phillies (Mar. 9 and 24) and a Mar. 30 visit by the defending World Champion Yankees. See pages 52-53 for the complete spring training schedule and ticket information.



Yunel Escobar really came into his own last year as one of the league's best shortstops and a dependable run producer.



POWER PERSONIFIED

New First Baseman Troy Glaus Has The Stats To Match His 6-5, 250-Pound Frame

BY JON COOPER

IT'S BEEN 11 SEASONS since the Braves received 30 home runs from a right-handed-hitting first baseman. That was Andres Galarraga, who hit 44 in 1998.

Who better to bring back the kind of power "The Big Cat" brought to first base than someone nicknamed "The Big Dog"?

At 6-5, approaching 250 pounds, Troy Glaus, is a 12-year major league veteran who signed a one-year deal with the Braves as a free agent on Jan. 5. He brings to Atlanta a thunderous bat that has delivered 304 career homers (20th among active players), five 30-homer seasons, and two Silver Slugger Awards.

Such consistent power is welcome at Turner Field, where over the past 10 seasons, only two first basemen - left- or right-handed - have managed to hit as many homers in a season as the 25.3 Glaus averages per year (Galarraga hit 28 in 2000 and Adam LaRoche hit 32 in 2006). Last year, Braves first basemen (LaRoche, Casey Kotchman, Martin Prado, Barbaro Canizares and Greg Norton) combined for 19.

"Troy gives us a guy in the middle of the lineup who can very easily hit in that 25 to 30 home run range and drive in 100 runs and give us that offensive presence we've been missing," said Frank Wren.

"His numbers speak for themselves," added Bobby Cox. "He's only 33 years old, and that's not old in baseball by any means. He's a run-producer, always has been."

Glaus comes to the Braves following a 2009 season in which he was shelved for all but 14 games due to arthroscopic shoulder surgery in January, which led to complications when he admittedly forced his rehab in an attempt to get back by Opening Day. He returned in September, but hit only .172, without a homer or an RBI, then was 0-for-2 as a pinch-hitter in the Division Series.

He understood why the Cardinals didn't use him more, and he holds no grudges.

"That was the most frustrating thing last year, not being able to play," he said. "Then, when I was healthy and back on the roster not playing, it was frustrating, but I understood the situation. I was not going to go in there and make a stink about it. I want to get out there. I want to compete, and I want to play in as many games and as often as I possibly can."

To that end, he spent much of the winter working out with Oakland A's outfielder Jack Cust at Cust's Baseball Academy, in Flemington, N.J., near the family home, and has regained full range of motion in his shoulder.

"I've been able to get myself in the quality of shape that I wasn't able to the season before, and I foresee continuing on where I left off [prior to the injury]," he said.

That's good news for the Braves, because Glaus has never hit fewer than 20 homers in a season in which he's played at least 100 games.

He's comfortable hitting anywhere from third through sixth in the lineup, with his most productive spot being fifth (93 homers, 284 RBIs) — although his 88 homers and 258 RBIs in the cleanup spot aren't too shabby — and is excited about the possibility of hitting between All-Stars Chipper Jones and Brian McCann.

"It would be wonderful," he said. "Obviously, facing a right-handed pitcher and you're surrounded by two lefties, it's a perfect scenario for a right-handed hitter. Both those guys' track records speak for themselves. I relish the opportunity to hit between them."

POLIYA DIANAT/ATLANTA BRAVES

Troy Glaus, with Bobby Cox (R), meets the Atlanta media for the first time at Turner Field.

Glaus also welcomes the challenge of learning his new position in the field, even though he's only played six career games at first base (four in '08, two last season).

The switch across the diamond can be humbling, as it was for three-time Gold Glove third baseman Ken Caminiti, who had difficulty trying to make the switch when he came to Atlanta in 2001.

Glaus admits there will be an adjustment in getting used to the different angle at which the ball comes at him (Caminiti's biggest problem), but thinks his sound fielding mechanics will work to his advantage.

"The actual act of catching a groundball is not going to change," said Glaus, a career .952 fielder at third, who has successfully fielded all 46 chances in his limited exposure at first. "I'm going to have to get used to being on the other side of the field, because I've never really been over there, but that's just repetition. That's what spring training is going to be for.

"I'm going to have to pay a lot more attention to some of the different responsibilities that a first baseman has," he added. "It will probably be a little bit more thinking in the beginning. Early in spring, bear with me. I'll get that all ironed out."

The sooner Glaus becomes familiar with first base, the sooner he can help get the Braves back to the position he grew accustomed to seeing them when growing up.

"I don't think there's anybody my age or within 10 years of my age who didn't grow up watching the Braves on television," he said. "I think this affords me an opportunity to play on a team that I think is very, very close to getting back to the playoffs and getting this organization back to where it's used to being. I'm looking forward to practicing some first base."

This season won't be the first that Glaus has changed positions — the Carlsbad (Calif.) High School star was originally a shortstop. He turned down the hometown San Diego Padres, who drafted him in the second round in 1994 (37th overall), and chose to play at UCLA.

Glaus was a key part of the bronze-medal winning U.S. Olympic Team at the 1996 Games, hitting four homers in the games played at Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium. As a junior, he was Pac-10 Player of the Year and a first-team All-American after setting a single-season conference record by hitting 34 homers (breaking Mark McGwire's record of 32) and leading the Bruins to the College World Series.

He was drafted in the first round (third overall) by the Anaheim Angels in 1997, signed that September, and, after 109 minor league games at Double-A Midland and Triple-A Vancouver, was in the majors, debuting July 31, 1998.

Glaus earned the starting third base job the next season. In 2000, he set an American League single-season record for home runs by a third baseman (46 of his 47) and earned his first of four All-Star appearances (2000, '01, '03, '06), He played in the 2000 game at Turner Field and finished with a career-best 47 homers and 102 RBIs, his first of back-to-

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

GETTY IMAGES/STEPHEN DUNN

BATTER UP!

I'M LUCKY TO PLAY IN THREE STRAIGHT SERIES

PLAYING ON THREE WORLD SERIES teams in the last three years (Boston in 2007, Tampa Bay '08 and the Yankees '09) was really a question of being at the right place at the right time. It was a great experience, and I think all those teams would say I contributed to their winning.

I've been all over the place in baseball. I was with the Cubs and A's in the minor leagues and played in Toronto for five years, Boston for two years, Tampa one year, and Pittsburgh and New York (Yankees) last year.

I've only played in the National League for three months of my career, but I think I have a feel for the National League. Inter-league play helped with that. You actually get to see how the game works, because it is different with all the pinch-hitting, the double-switches, that go on.

I had some other offers, but I think playing for Bobby Cox was the tipping point for me coming here, knowing how he uses his bench. You hear from everyone who's played for him, about how good he is to his bench players. He communicates with them, letting them know ahead of time, "This guy's banged up - you might start tomorrow."

That's real important to us, because at least mentally, you can get yourself ready for something. You're not out in the water, not knowing when you're going to get in there.

Communication is huge for a bench player. I've had some great managers. Terry Francona (Boston) was one of the best, Joe Madden in Tampa, and (Joe) Girardi in New York was good. But I know that Bobby has as good a reputation as anyone in baseball, and I'm excited that I'll have a chance to play for him.

> "I HAD SOME OTHER OFFERS, BUT I THINK PLAYING FOR BOBBY COX WAS THE TIPPING POINT FOR ME COMING HERE."

I know my role and accept my role, so even though I know I'm here to do whatever they ask of me, it's good to know I have a chance to play every day. And if someone does go down, I can step in and play for two or three weeks at a time.

I came up as a third baseman and played that position every day for four years, but now it's wherever I'm needed. I've played a lot at first, and I've played a lot of outfield the past three years - more right than left field

In terms of pinch-hitting, I just try to have a professional at-bat. It's not all about taking a pitch. Sometimes when you're pinch-hitting, if you take strike one, you're in the passive mode. I think you have to be ready to hit when you're pinch-hitting.

I'm more of a patient hitter when I start a game. I like to see more pitches and get deep into an at-bat. When I'm pinch-hitting, I'm ready to swing, because if you let the first pitch go by, you might not see anything else.

You don't want to get to two strikes, especially off the bench. The first pitch I see that's straight, I'm going to take a whack at. I think it's harder, mentally, to be a bench player, because you don't have everyday status where you're comfortable or seeing a lot of pitches.

My approach is that you can't give in. You're still a competitor - you can compete, you grind. You do what you can to help your team. I like this club a lot, but it all depends on health. That's true for every team. The pieces are definitely here to compete.

I'm from Wisconsin, but I live in Scottsdale, Arizona, now. My wife is Kathryn, and we have a two-and-a-half-year-old daughter, Ava. We're about to have our second child, a daughter, in February. Kathryn is due Feb. 14, and I'll be able to be there when the baby is born. We know it's a girl, and we're going to name her Dylan. The family will come to Florida in March for 10-14 days.

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

back 40-homer, 100-RBI seasons.

That off-season, he also was part of the Major League All-Star Team that traveled to Japan, with Bobby Cox as manager. That tour made an impression on Glaus and played a big part in his signing with Atlanta. "Getting the chance to play for Bobby was something that I wanted to do my entire career," Glaus said, "ever since 2000, when I got to play for him in Japan."

In 2002, Glaus was named MVP of the World Series, hitting .385 (10-for-26), with three homers and eight RBIs and seven runs scored to help the Angels beat San Francisco in seven games. He stayed in Anaheim until the winter of 2004, when he signed as a free agent with Arizona.

He was traded to Toronto the next winter, then was sent to St. Louis on Jan. 14, 2008, for Scott Rolen, in an even-up swap of third basemen.

Glaus is tough to get out of the lineup. He's played in at least 149 games in seven of his 12 seasons, and he's been resilient, bouncing back well in seasons after injuries. Following a then-career-low 58 games in 2004, his last season in Anaheim, Glaus averaged 142 games, 30.5 homers and 90.5 RBIs between 2005 and 2008.

Then came the frustration of 2009, but all that time off allowed Glaus to learn a lot about himself.

"We went through some rough times, but it all came out in the end, and it actually was a good growing year for him, as well," said Ann Glaus, Troy's wife of six years, who was able to relate to his struggles and add important moral support because she's a competitor in equestrian. "This is his dream, this is his love, and this is his passion. It's about being together. It's about being a team and knowing, no matter what, you can make it through."

He also learned a lot about the Braves, something that made the opportunity to play for them even more attractive.

"Unfortunately, last summer I wasn't playing, so I was able to actually watch," he said. "Just watching teams and watching how they play and how they conduct themselves, you get a feel for the guys, who they are and how they play. This was an organization and a group of players I really enjoyed watching play. For me, that's important.

"I wanted to focus more on playing in a city and for an organization and in a situation that gave me the best chance to get back to the playoffs and be in a winning atmosphere," he added. "That's why, ultimately, the position didn't matter as much as that did to me."

PAINTING THE CORNERS

BY JAY BUSBEE

THE PARADE OF FIRST BASEMEN

POUYA DIANAT/ATLANTA BRAVES

Frank Wren and Bobby Cox help the Braves' latest first baseman display the name and number Cox likely will write in the No. 4 slot of the batting order much of the season.

JUST AFTER THE NEW YEAR, the Braves announced that Troy Glaus would be the team's starting first baseman in 2010. It was a fine signing. Glaus is a former All-Star and the 2002 World Series MVP, exactly the kind of solid, big-hitting vet that the Braves need. But considering how often first basemen come and go in the Atlanta organization, you can forgive Glaus if he hasn't gone out and gotten "ATL1B" tattooed across his back.

Not trying to imply that there's a revolving door at Position No. 3 at Turner Field, but let's put it this way: Every new first baseman receives a HELLO, MY NAME IS nametag when he signs with the Braves. Their names are written on strips of masking tape and stuck to their uniforms. They don't park their cars; they leave them running just outside Turner Field.

I'm kidding, of course... or am I? Since the Braves moved to The Ted, 21 different players have logged significant time at first base. Over that same time, Atlanta has had just three regular catchers and two regular third basemen, counting the seasons where Chipper Jones played left field.

It wasn't always this way. For most of the '90s, first base was where the Braves' elder statesmen set up shop. Sid Bream and Fred McGriff owned the bag from 1991 through 1997.

They were stamped out of the same mold. Both were quiet, towering, easy targets for two generations of Braves infielders. Both possessed the blazing speed of growing grass. Both irrevocably stamped their names into Braves lore. For the youngsters out there, McGriff arrived in Atlanta on the same day in 1994 when the old Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium press box (and that year's Braves) caught fire, and Bream scored the winning run in a 1992 playoff game of some note.

But in the 1998 season, the Braves sold McGriff to Tampa Bay, following the "better to lose a player a year too early than hold on a year too long" philosophy. (McGriff would make the All-Star team as a Devil Ray in 2000.) The Crime Dog's departure kicked off the parade of Atlanta first-sackers that will likely continue into 2011. For a franchise that models itself on stability, it's been slightly jarring to see just how many guys have logged time at first.

So, why the constant rotation? For one thing, first base is, in theory, the easiest defensive spot to replace on the field. It's the only position late-career players learn on the fly in order to hang on. You don't see teams rotating gimpy-kneed catchers in to play center, for instance. And in fact, the first base transplant is exactly what Atlanta will be doing with Glaus, who's spent most of his career at third.

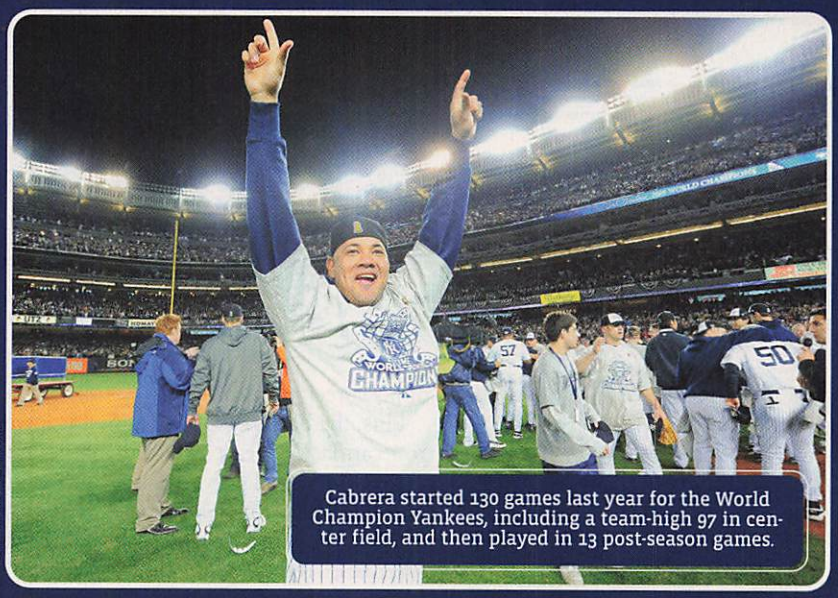
Plus, the barrier to entry at first is lower. You can lack at least two and maybe even three of baseball's five tools - hitting for average, hitting for power, speed, arm, glove - and still be a reasonably productive first baseman. And over the last decade-plus, Atlanta has put that theory in motion.

The Braves' recent first-base history is loaded with guys who, as the old romantic saying goes, weren't Mister Right, but were Mister Right Now. There were converted outfielders (Ryan Klesko), late-career wall-bangers (Wally Joyner, Ken Caminiti), guys who popped in for a quick stint (Scott Thorman, Craig Wilson, Rico Brogna) and not one, but two Francos (Julio and Matt). There were potential Hall of Famers and guys you couldn't name on a bet.

The only All-Star out of the bunch was Andres Galarraga in 1999 and 2001, but Atlanta had him only for the tail end of his career. The best first baseman of the crew - pound for pound, the best first baseman in Atlanta history - was Mark Teixeira. But he exited without even playing a full season's worth of games, dealt to the Angels when Atlanta couldn't come up with a contract with enough zeroes on the back end. The closest to a "regular" was Adam LaRoche, who played parts of four seasons with the Braves, including a very strong second half of 2009. But LaRoche, a free agent at the end of last season, wanted more of a long-term commitment than Atlanta was willing to make. Thus, enter Glaus.

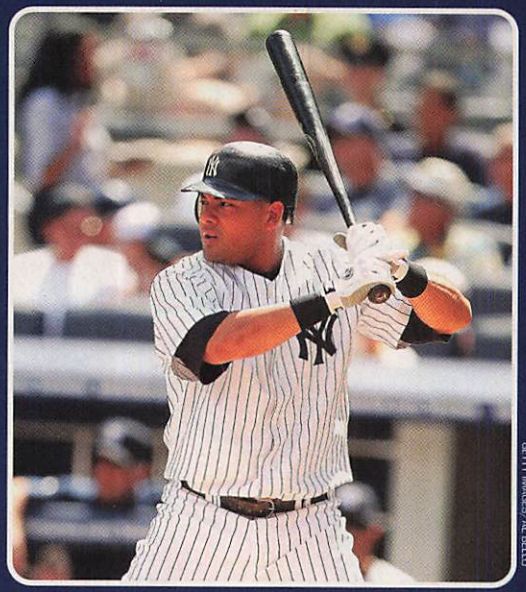
Glaus comes to Atlanta knowing he's a potential short-timer. Freddie Freeman, one of Atlanta's prized minor league prospects, is developing at a rate that could have him in Atlanta for the 2011 season. Freeman, who was all of three years old when Sid slid, has impressed Braves scouts with his plate discipline and his first-base defense, and he's likely one reason why Glaus was only signed to a one-year deal.

And if Glaus happens to spend 2010 peppering the 755 Club with homers, well, then Atlanta would have, for once, too many first basemen. Nice problem to have, huh?



GETTY IMAGES/ RICH PILLING

Cabrera started 130 games last year for the World Champion Yankees, including a team-high 97 in center field, and then played in 13 post-season games.



GETTY IMAGES/ AL BELLO

THE MELK MAN

ADDITION OF CABRERA PROVIDES VERSATILITY TO OUTFIELD ALIGNMENT OPTIONS

BY JOE FRISARO OF MLB.COM

A SURPLUS OF QUALITY starting pitching put the Braves in position to explore deals to upgrade the club in other areas.

On Dec. 22, the organization spun off one of its talented righthanders to add an experienced outfielder with a World Series championship under his belt.

The Braves finalized a deal that sent Javier Vazquez and lefthanded reliever Boone Logan to the Yankees in exchange for Melky Cabrera and pitching prospects Mike Dunn and Arodys Vizcaino.

Vazquez became expendable after the Braves re-signed Tim Hudson in late October. The 33-year-old Vazquez was 15-10 with a 2.87 ERA in 32 starts for Atlanta last year.

"Javier had a very good year for us in 2009," said Frank Wren. "But all along, as we went into our winter planning, we knew that we would have an extra pitcher that would allow us to improve our club in another area.

"So, we have worked hard the last two months to try to figure out the best package that we could acquire that would best improve our club for 2010, as well as improve the depth in our farm system. I feel very happy with the deal we made."

Starting pitching anchored the Braves in 2009. Their rotation topped the National League with a 3.52 ERA.

By dealing Vazquez and the $11.5 million he was set to earn in 2010, the Braves put themselves in position to retain Derek Lowe, who had been mentioned repeatedly in possible trade scenarios.

Lowe is set to make $15 million in the coming season, and he has three years and $45 million remaining on his contract. Vazquez returns to the Yankees, a team he played for in 2004.

Atlanta's rotation now shapes up, in no particular order, as Lowe, Tommy Hanson, Hudson, Jair Jurrjens and Kenshin Kawakami.

With so much trade talk around Lowe, Wren said he has already spoken with the veteran righthander about his status with the club.

"I made it pretty clear all winter long that once we made the decision to pursue Tim Hudson this off-season that we were going to have depth at that position to do other things with our club," Wren said.

Cabrera, 25, addresses a need for outfield depth in Atlanta.

"Obviously, Melky Cabrera gives us a player with post-season experience - most recently, obviously, in the World Series this past year," Wren said. "He has the ability to play all three outfield

CABRERA'S MAJOR LEAGUE RECORD

YEAR	TEAM	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	AVG	OBP	SLG
2005	NYY	6	19	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	2	.211	.211	.211
2006	NYY	130	460	75	129	26	2	7	50	56	59	.280	.360	.391
2007	NYY	150	545	66	149	24	8	8	73	43	68	.273	.327	.391
2008	NYY	129	414	42	103	12	1	8	37	29	58	.249	.301	.341
2009	NYY	154	485	66	133	28	1	13	68	43	59	.274	.336	.416
TOTALS		**569**	**1,923**	**250**	**518**	**90**	**12**	**36**	**228**	**171**	**246**	**.269**	**.331**	**.385**

positions. That versatility helps our ballclub a lot.

"We have some good pieces in place in our outfield. We're also still looking to add to our offense," said Wren, prior to signing Troy Glaus to play first base. "But we think Melky is a perfect fit."

A switch-hitter, Cabrera batted .274 with 13 homers and 68 RBIs while helping the Yankees claim their 27th World Series Championship. He played in 154 games, mostly in center field, and started 130 games.

Where he bats in the lineup, Wren said, will be up to Bobby Cox.

While Cabrera has played a lot of center, Nate McLouth is considered the front-runner at that spot. Heading into spring training, it appears Cabrera may wind up playing right field, pending how top prospect Jason Heyward plays during the spring. Heyward, baseball's overall minor league player of the year, is a candidate for right field, but it remains to be seen if the 20-year-old will be big league-ready by Opening Day.

"Being a switch-hitter, he has a lot of versatility," said Wren of Cabrera. "I think we'll probably use that versatility and allow him to play different positions, to give Matt Diaz a break, either in left or right. If Jason Heyward is with our club in 2010, [Cabrera] would be a good addition to complement [right field], and also Nate McLouth. Melky has a lot value in that he can do a lot of things."

Dunn, meanwhile, is a 24-year-old lefty with a mid-90s fastball. He appeared in 26 games and was 3-3 with a 3.71 ERA at Double-A Trenton last year. In 53 1/3 innings, the lefty struck out 76 and walked 32.

The general feeling is he is close to being big league-ready.

"Mike Dunn is a power left-handed reliever," Wren said. "We saw him do really well in the Arizona Fall League."

Dunn fanned 20 in 10 1/3 innings in the AFL, and with a strong spring, he could earn a spot on the Opening Day roster.

Vizcaino is another prospect the Braves are high on, and they were insistent that he was in the deal.

At short-season Class-A Staten Island, the 19-year-old Vizcaino was 2-4 with a 2.13 ERA in 10 starts. In 42 1/3 innings, the righthander struck out 52 and walked 15.

"He's a very talented young pitcher," Wren said. "We feel like we have another really fine young prospect to add to our stable of pitchers already. We feel very fortunate to be able to make a deal like this."

CARDS TOOK THE BAIT ON BIG HOLLIDAY DEAL

WOULD AGENT SCOTT BORAS have pulled an **Adrian Beltre** with **Matt Holliday**, taking a one-year deal in search of a better free-agent market next off-season? The Cardinals believed the answer was yes, and their fear of losing Holliday prompted them to award him a seven-year contract. One rival executive, however, says that the Cardinals' reasoning was flawed, contending that Holliday would not have accepted a one-year deal. "That's not the type of person Matt is," the exec said, "and where would he have gone for a year to build his value beyond where it was?"

The Red Sox got a steal on **Adrian Beltre**, signing him to a one-year, $10 million contract with a club option for 2011. The value of the option will increase from $5 million to $10 million only if Beltre makes 640 plate appearances – a number he attained in 2004, '05 and '06 and missed by one in '07.

As the Dodgers sought to create payroll flexibility, they were determined not to trade any of their top arbitration-eligible players, such as rightfielder **Andre Ethier** and closer **Jonathan Broxton**. The Dodgers, after repeatedly resisting the temptation to move their best youngsters as they ascended to the majors, were not about to shift course and break up their core, according to major-league sources. The team wanted to sign free-agent righthander **Joel Pineiro**, but essentially was limited to cash-neutral transactions due to the divorce proceedings between owner **Frank McCourt** and his wife, **Jamie**.

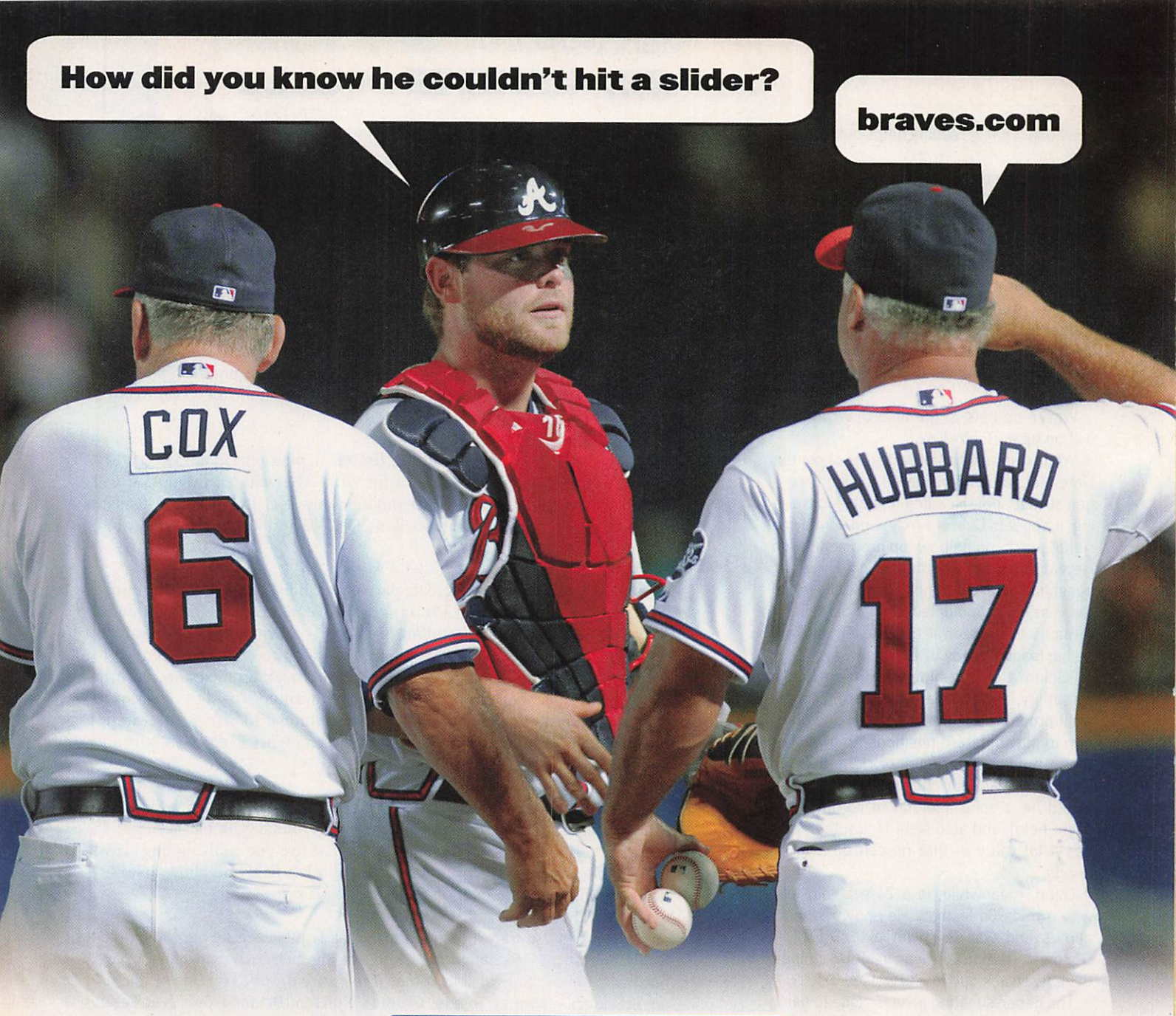
The Diamondbacks did well to sign free-agent first baseman and former Brave **Adam LaRoche** to a one-year contract. LaRoche, 30, has averaged 25 homers, 85 RBIs and an .836 OPS over the past five years. His signing allows the Diamondbacks to keep **Conor Jackson** in left field and allow first-base prospect **Chad Allen** to develop at his own pace.

The Rockies also were looking to make a splash by waiting out the market. **Robb Quinlan** and **Fernando Tatis** were among their early free-agent targets, but the club was ready to shift course if the price dropped on one of the better infielders – **Miguel Tejada**, **Orlando Hudson**, **Orlando Cabrera**, **Felipe Lopez**, **Adam Kennedy** and **Melvin Mora**. All of those players still were available in mid-January.

Three or four clubs were poking around on Padres closer **Heath Bell**, but the team "was not really looking to do anything with him," according to one source with knowledge of the club's thinking. Bell remains affordable, even for the Padres. His salary jumped from $1.255 million to $4 million when the club signed him to a one-year deal to avoid arbitration.

Believe it or not, the Rangers were in position to possibly trade a starting pitcher in spring training. After adding righthander **Rich Harden**, the team signed righthander **Colby Lewis**, who excelled the past two seasons in Japan. Put those two together with lefthander **Derek Holland** and righthanders **Scott Feldman**, **Tommy Hunter** and **Brandon McCarthy**, and the Rangers could have a slight surplus – assuming, of course, that Harden stays healthy.

- KEN ROSENTHAL IS A SENIOR WRITER FOR FOXSPORTS.COM



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GLAUS ADDS SOME SERIOUS POWER

BY STEVE FALL

TROY GLAUS may not hit for a high batting average (.255 lifetime), but he makes his hits count.

Glaus has had 589 of his 1,276 career hits go for extra bases. His extra-base hit percentage of 46.2 is the 10th highest in major league history (among players with at least 1,000 career hits).

The Braves new first baseman trails Mark McGwire (51.7), Adam Dunn (50.3), Barry Bonds (49.1), David Ortiz (48.8), Hank Greenberg (48.0), Carlos Delgado (47.8), Babe Ruth (47.2), Gorman Thomas (46.9) and Jim Thome (46.8). Among players who spent most of their career with the Braves, Andruw Jones has the highest ranking (24th, 43.9) in this category.

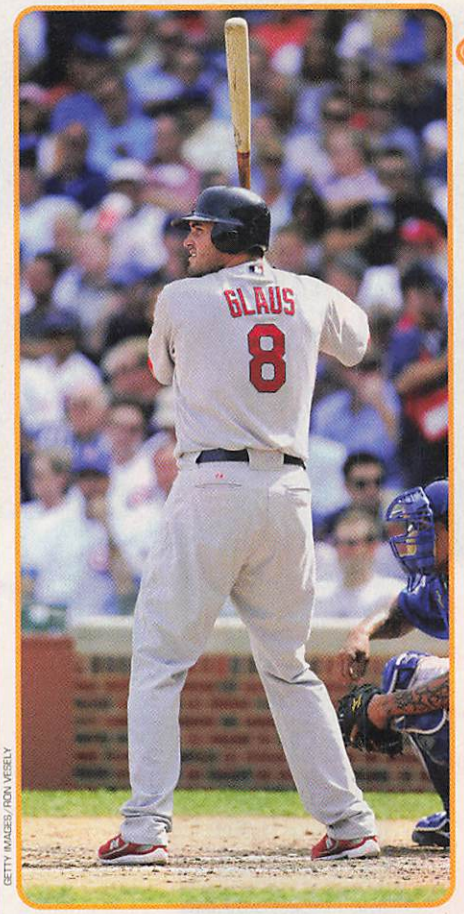
From 1999 through 2008, Glaus was one of 12 major leaguers to hit 300 home runs. He placed 11th in this time frame with 303 homers, just ahead of his new teammate, Chipper Jones (300).

Only 12 players who played the majority of their career at third base have reached 300 career homers, and Atlanta now employs two of them in the same infield. Five members of this group spent significant time with the Braves. In addition to Jones (426 HR) and Glaus (304), Eddie Mathews (512), Darrell Evans (414) and Vinny Castilla (320) make that list.

Like Jones, Glaus takes a patient approach at the plate. He is one of 10 active players with at least six seasons of 25 homers and 80 walks. Glaus has six such seasons. Jones ties Manny Ramirez for second with nine. Thome leads with 13.

Glaus also owns the second-highest career slugging percentage (.797) in post-season history (min: 40 plate appearances). He trails only Carlos Beltran (.817). Glaus also has a 1.214 OPS (on-base plus slugging percentage) during the post-season. Just Beltran (1.302) and Willie Mays Aikens (1.215) surpass that. Glaus has homered nine times in 74 post-season at-bats, or once every 8.2 at-bats.

Takashi Saito has the sixth-lowest batting average allowed (.196) in MLB history among pitchers with at least 200 innings. The righthander also has struck out 10.9 batters per nine innings in his career, which puts him 11th all-time.



GETTY IMAGES/ RON VESELY

New first baseman Troy Glaus ranks 10th in major league history with 46.2 percent of his hits going for extra bases.

Saito makes the active leaders in strikeout rate, which measures the percentage of batters faced that a pitcher strikes out (strikeout rate excludes intentional walks from the batters faced total since a pitcher has no chance for a strikeout). Saito has a 30.7 strikeout rate, placing him fifth among active players who have faced at least 900 batters. Bullpen mate Billy Wagner leads with a 33.0 percentage, followed by Jonathan Broxton (32.6), Brad Lidge (32.0) and Francisco Rodriguez (31.3).

A closer for three seasons with the Dodgers, Saito excels at preserving leads. He has 83 saves in his four major league seasons, and has blown just 12 opportunities. His 87.4 save percentage ranks ninth among pitchers with at least 25 save chances from 2006 through 2009. Saito trails several elite closers: Mariano Rivera (93.6), Joe Nathan (90.3), Joakim Soria (89.9), Jonathan Papelbon (89.9), Troy Percival (89.5), Trevor Hoffman (88.6), Rodriguez (88.5) and Bobby Jenks (87.5). Wagner (85.6) is 14th in this category.

Melky Cabrera's 2009 numbers don't look like anything special. He had 13 home runs, 68 RBIs, a .274 batting average, .336 on-base percentage, and .416 slugging percentage. But Cabrera should benefit from two factors in 2010. He turns 26 in August, and players younger than 27 usually improve. He should also improve by moving from the American League to the National.

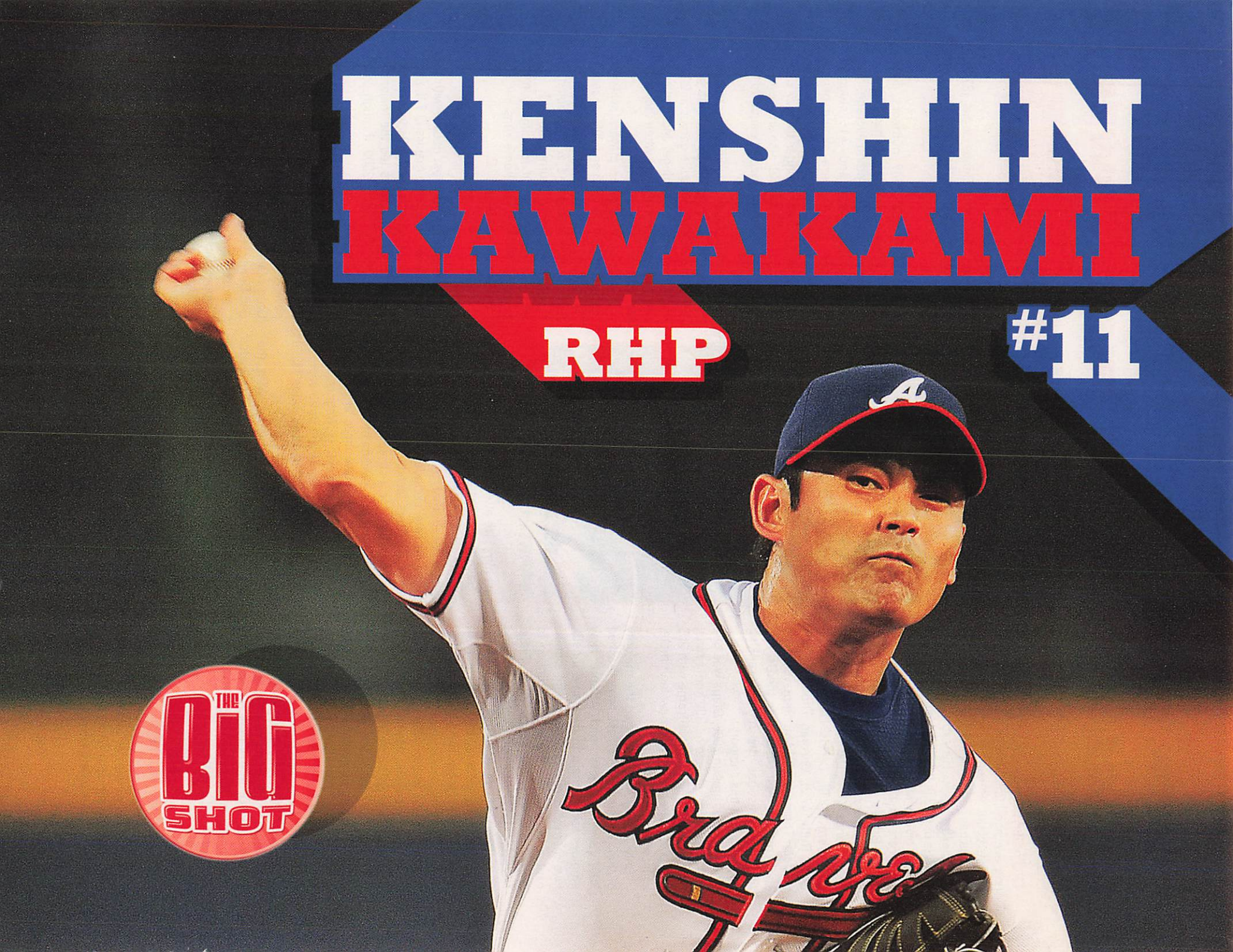
The AL has become significantly stronger than the NL in recent years. The AL won 138 of the 252 inter-league games in 2009, a .548 winning percentage. Most players see their statistics improve when they move from the AL to the NL.

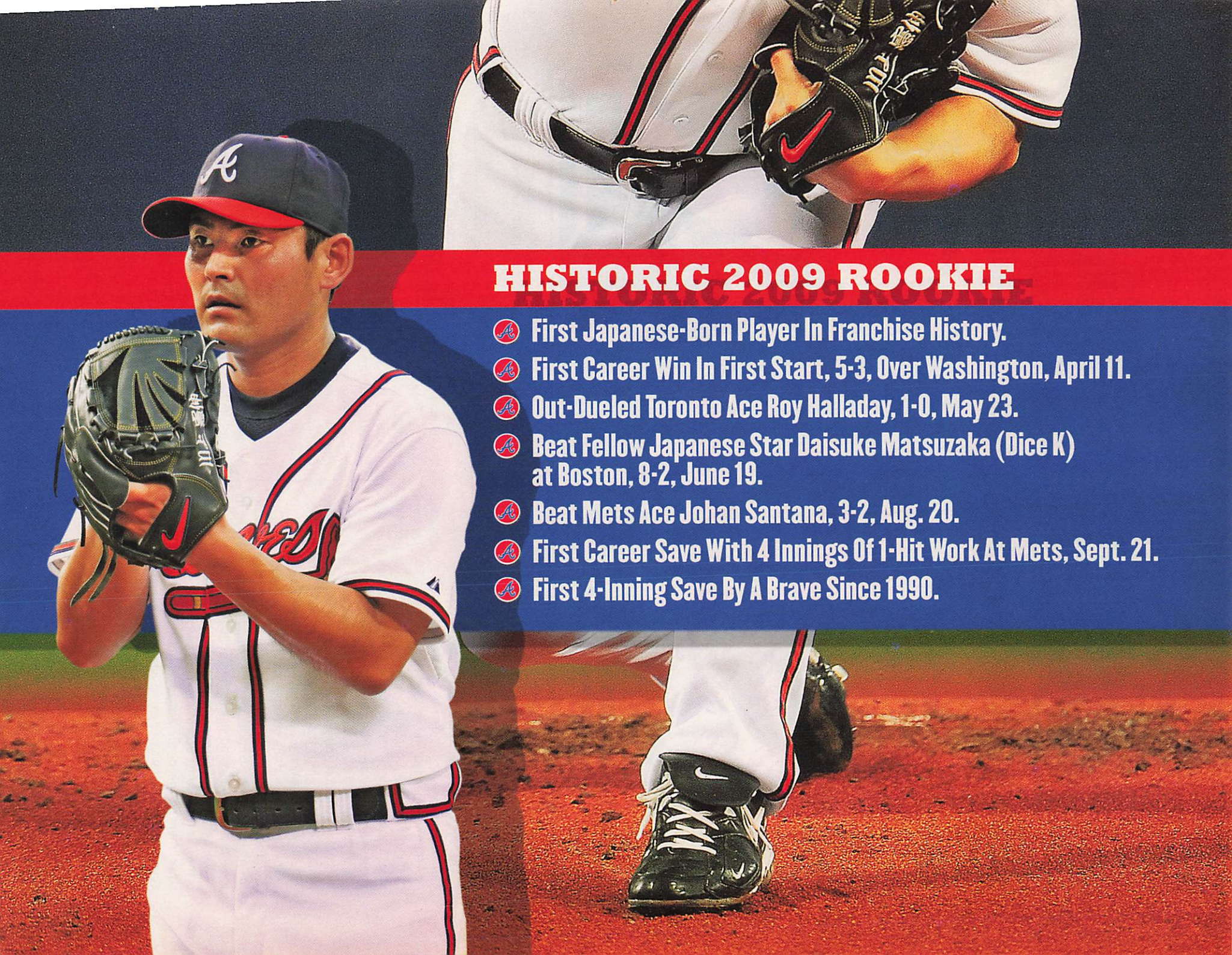
A total of 55 position players switched leagues during the 2008 and 2009 seasons. While in the AL, they batted .255 with a .327 on-base percentage and .413 slugging. In the NL, their numbers jumped to .261, .338, and .429. They also hit for slightly more power in the NL, 18.1 home runs per 600 plate appearances vs. 17.2.

Atlanta finished the last decade with the second-best ERA in the majors (3.93), after leading all teams in the 1990s with a 3.49 figure. The 1990s staffs led the majors in strikeouts. But from 2000 through 2009 they placed 13th.

The Braves also had just two 20-win seasons this past decade, by Tom Glavine (2000) and Russ Ortiz (2003). They had seven in the 1990s: Glavine (1991-93, 1998), Greg Maddux (1993), John Smoltz (1996), and Denny Neagle (1997).

Most fans would probably assume Chipper Jones led the club in hitting in the 2000s. His .311 batting average actually was third among Braves with 1,000 plate appearances. Gary Sheffield (.319) led the way, followed by Matt Diaz (.316). Jones did rank first in on-base percentage (.413) and RBIs (921), though Andruw Jones (288) led him in homers (273).


KENSHIN
KAWAKAMI
RHP
#11
THE BIG SHOT
Braves



HISTORIC 2009 ROOKIE

- First Japanese-Born Player In Franchise History.
- First Career Win In First Start, 5-3, Over Washington, April 11.
- Out-Dueled Toronto Ace Roy Halladay, 1-0, May 23.
- Beat Fellow Japanese Star Daisuke Matsuzaka (Dice K) at Boston, 8-2, June 19.
- Beat Mets Ace Johan Santana, 3-2, Aug. 20.
- First Career Save With 4 Innings Of 1-Hit Work At Mets, Sept. 21.
- First 4-Inning Save By A Brave Since 1990.

NOW PITCHING!

Jurrjens Is Front And Center In Helping Market Curacao Tourism To The World

"Thank you for visiting us and have a safe flight home"
- Jair Jurrjens -
Professional Baseball player
CURAÇAO
Curaçao Tourist Board

Jair Jurrjens, now an official goodwill "ambassador" for Curacao, gives visitors to the island the "thumbs up" on this billboard along the scenic highway near the airport.

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN

JAIR JURRJENS isn't just a talented, young pitcher. He's also a pitchman!

The Curacao Tourist Board, taking advantage of Jurrjens' success as a rookie with the Braves in 2008 when he won 13 games and that he expanded on last year when his 2.60 ERA was third best in the National League, signed the country's up-and-coming star to an agreement that gives them the right to use his image in marketing and advertising to promote the island.

Exhibit No. 1: On the scenic highway leading to the Curacao International Airport, tourists see Jurrjens' smiling face beaming from a billboard, giving the thumbs up sign. The billboard reads, "Thank you for visiting us, and have a safe flight home."

The importance of the message can't be minimized.

Tourism follows only Curacao's port and oil refineries among the major economic contributors to keeping the island ranked in the top places to live and visit in the Caribbean.

Watching over all of the pieces of the important tourist industry is the Curacao Tourist Board, an aggressive agency funded by the government but independent of its control. Its job is to look for creative ways to entice visitors to the island and keep them coming back. What better front person to help accomplish their goals than one of the brightest young pitchers in Major League Baseball?

It's a mission Jurrjens is happy to be part of, because of his intense national pride.

"I love my country," he said. "I'm proud of it and love to know that people are visiting, seeing the sights and the beauty of my country. They approached me to see if I would be interested, and I thought if I can help in any way to make that happen, let's do it!"

Curacao has a diverse history and culture, pristine beaches, fantastic diving and snorkeling. The island's residents are friendly, charming people. Beautiful luxury resorts line the beaches and the waterfront area, like the Renaissance in Fort Rif, Otrabanda, with its fine dining and exclusive boutiques designed to bring in high-end tourists.

In 1997, the entire downtown Willemstad area, the Punda and Otrabanda, was recognized as a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural (UNESCO) World Heritage site, one of only six sites to be recognized in the Caribbean. The designation isn't just an honor, it's also protection for the current architecture and further development in Willemstad.

With so much going for it, it's easy to understand why tourists would want to visit such an island paradise. The bulk of visitors to Curacao come from South America, primarily their neighbor Venezuela, and European countries with colder climates, such as Holland, Germany and Austria. But the Curacao Tourist Board isn't satisfied.

Because of the success of Jurrjens, as well as former Braves centerfielder Andruw Jones and other major leaguers, along with the Little League teams from Curacao that routinely make it to the Little League World Series, baseball fans in general and Braves fans in particular have heard of Curacao for quite some time. But the Board knows that many Americans not only haven't heard of the island, but they also couldn't find it on a map.

This presents a challenge to Curacao as it competes against better-known Caribbean destinations for much-desired U.S. tourist dollars. But the U.S. tourist numbers are beginning to trend upward.

From the Curacao Tourist Board's own data compiled in the first quarter of 2008, tourist arrivals from the U.S., either from air travel or day trippers from cruise ships, had risen by five percent over the first quarter in 2007. Compared to numbers from other markets, such as Europe and South America, the gain is a modest one, but it is important to note that the increase took place during a major economic downturn in the U.S. economy.

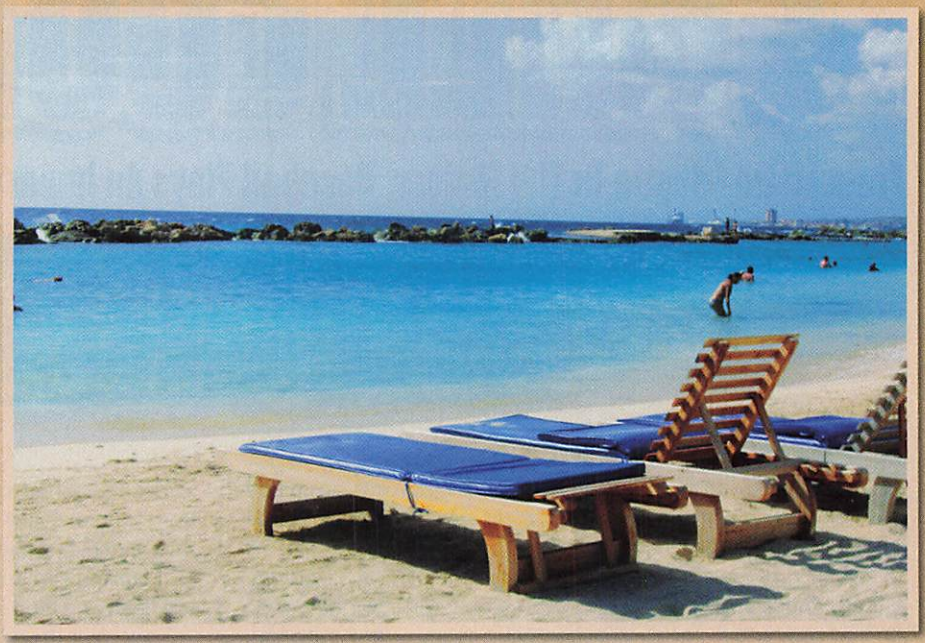
As U.S. consumer confidence rises, the Tourist Board is hopeful that it can creatively market the island so that tourists will view Curacao as a destination worth visiting.

The people at the Tourist Board couldn't be happier to have such an enthusiastic spokesman as Jurrjens and already are brainstorming several ideas to use him in the coming months and possibly years.

According to Hugo Clarinda, senior management assistant with the Curacao Tourist Board, among the events under discussion is a golf tournament, hosted by Jurrjens, to be played sometime during the baseball off-season.

Invitees to the event would include Jurrjens' Braves teammates and their wives, as well as other special guests from inside and outside baseball. Journalists from the U.S. would be invited to attend in order to publicize the event, activities and the island. In addition to golf, guests would tour many of the historic and cultural sites on the island and hopefully keep Curacao on their short list of places to visit the next time they want to make an island getaway.

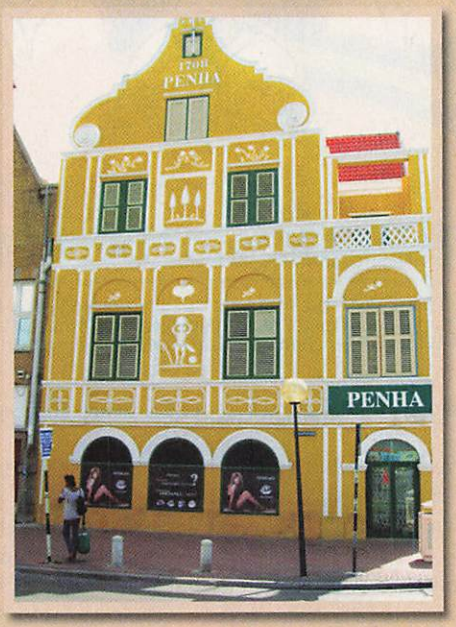
The Tourist Board also wants to tap into Jurrjens' history with and passion for the Little League program on Curacao by providing a big incentive for a lucky Little League team. Clarinda said another idea being discussed is a trip to Atlanta by the Little League team from Curacao that qualifies to go to the 2010 Little League World Series in Williamsport, Pa., which takes place in August. The team would travel to Atlanta to meet Jurrjens and attend a Braves game. While in Atlanta, the team would visit other Atlanta area attractions.



A view of the beach at the Lion's Dive & Beach Resort, one of Curacao's many beachfront resorts.

"There are a lot of details that would need to be worked out," said Clarinda.

The trip would be publicized in the media in Curacao and in the U.S., with the purpose of raising the profile of Curacao and the success of Curacao Little League.



The Penha building, located in the Punda district and dating to the early 1700s, is considered the finest example of Curacao's baroque architecture.

Curacao's international airport is served by several airlines, but there are only two U.S.-based carriers currently providing air service from the continental United States. American Airlines, which has a physical presence on the island, offers approximately 10 daily non-stop flights from Miami, and Delta Airlines, which initiated a weekly non-stop flight, Saturdays, from Atlanta in December 2007. The Tourist Board is currently involved in negotiations with Delta to expand their direct flight service to the island. Clarinda hopes the airline will see the benefit of adding a second mid-week flight to their service, perhaps as early as June 2010. If that occurs, the Tourist Board would like to use Jurrjens' image in their advertisements, primarily print, in targeted markets. It's an exciting development and one that's still in the discussion stages. However, should it happen, there is a natural tie-in since corporate headquarters for Delta are located in Atlanta. It's also the airline used by the Braves in all their team travel.

The Tourist Board couldn't be happier with the desire Jurrjens has to use his celebrity for their cause. And Jurrjens says he's open to all of the above, and more, as long as what he's asked to do helps his country.

"I'm not looking to be on billboards or in magazines for myself," he said. "I know I'm just a baseball player. It's a little bit funny to see myself on the sign, but I know it's doing something good for my country, and I'm proud that I can help."

SMALL COUNTRY BIG GAME

From Little League To The Majors, Baseball Plays An Important Role In Curacao's Culture

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN

FOR A COUNTRY with just over 140,000 citizens, Curacao has made a significant impact on the game of baseball, from the Little League to the major league levels.

Not only was Jair Jurrjens born and raised on Curacao, but the island's other products include 10-time Gold Glove winning centerfielder Andruw Jones, and Randall Simon, a first baseman who played for the Braves from 1997-99. Pitcher Shairon Martis started the 2009 season with the Washington Nationals after making his first career start against Atlanta as a September callup in 2008.

They all followed in the footsteps of Hensley "Bam Bam" Meulens, who was the first islander to make it to the major leagues. Meulens played for the Yankees (1989-1993), then spent four seasons in Japan, and returned to the majors briefly with the Montreal Expos in 1997.

Curacao baseball also received a boost during the 2009 World Baseball Classic when the team from the Netherlands, manned predominantly by players from Curacao and other island nations in the Netherlands Antilles, defeated the strong team from the Dominican Republic.

The Dutch team advanced to the second round where they were defeated by teams from Venezuela and the U.S. Nevertheless, their performance impressed many observers who are taking note of the strength of the sport in a place where soccer was thought to be king.

Youth baseball is particularly strong on Curacao. In 2002, the Senior League team won the World Series held in Bangor, Maine. Senior League, for ages 14-16, is a division of Little League Baseball.

Jurrjens was on that team and said the experience was a highlight of his playing career.

"It was the first time I'd been in the States," said Jurrjens. "It was awesome, but at that point, I was more worried about winning!"

This mural, painted on the wall outside the Curacao Sports Federation building, commemorates some of the players on Curacao's 2002 Senior League World Series Championship team, including Jurrjens (R).

The team had been together for several seasons, and that tournament was their last chance to win it all. Jurrjens was on the mound, closing out the game when the final out was made.

"I started screaming," he remembered. "My dad came out on the field, and then I started crying."

They were the first youth team from Curacao to win a championship on such a grand scale.

For the past nine consecutive years, a Little League team from Curacao has qualified for the Little League World Series in Williamsport, Pa., beating out teams from baseball powerhouse countries such as the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico.

In 2004, the team from Willemstad won the Series, beating a team from Thousand Oaks, California, in the final game. A documentary, Boys of Summer, has been made, chronicling a season in the life of the Curacao Little League team managed by Vernon Isabella.

Jurrjens is an enthusiastic part of the cheering section for the Little Leaguers.

"When I see them on television, I act like a kid myself," he said.

Jurrjens was given the opportunity to go to the Little League World Series in August 2008 to throw out the ceremonial first pitch prior to Curacao's game against Japan. It was a huge thrill for him, not as an individual, but as a native of Curacao. The Braves allowed him to make the trip between starts.

"It gives me so much pride," he said. "Standing there, with your country's name on your chest, seeing your flag and all the families there. It's priceless."

Many of the players Jurrjens played with in 2002 form his group of off-season workout partners and remain his closest friends.

"The guys I won the World Series with are like my brothers," he said. "For two or three months, those guys were my family. We were living together. So, even though everyone is doing their own thing now, we still talk, and when we see each other, we're still close."

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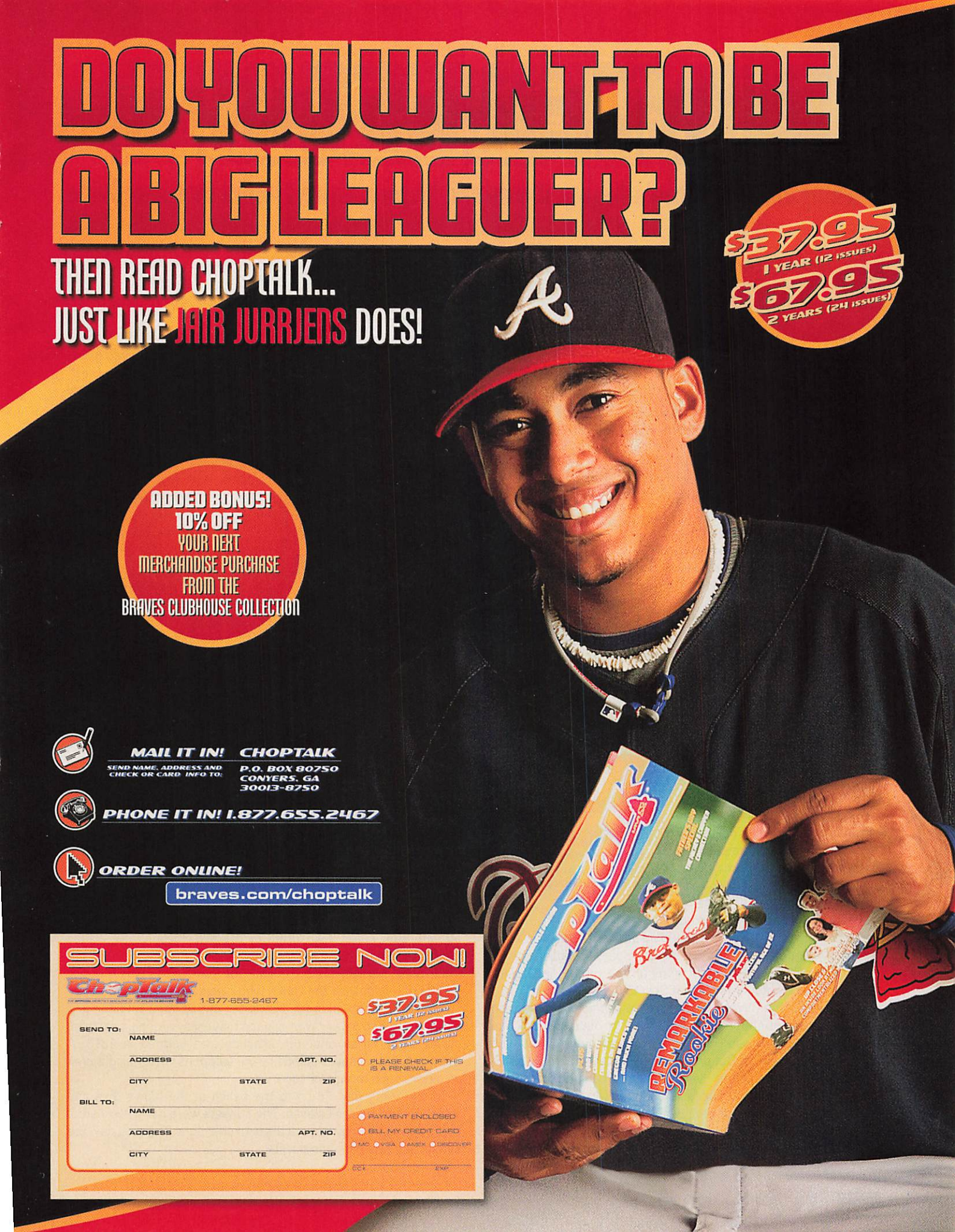

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WINTER ESCAPE

Learning About Curacao's Beauty, Charm And History With A Pitcher As A Tour Guide

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN

IT WAS A TOUGH ASSIGNMENT, but I was up for it! Travel to Curacao - an island paradise just 35 miles long and 7 miles across at its widest point - in the middle of winter to visit Jair Jurrjens and help ChopTalk readers learn more about him and his home.

Leaving 20-degree Atlanta in the morning, I was in 90-degree Willemstad by mid-afternoon. The flight is 4 hours and covers 1,770 miles, if direct, though I had a stop in Miami.

Like the gracious, accommodating host he proved to be, Jair met me at the airport and gave me a quick overview of the island while driving to his home in a suburb of the capital city.

In fact, I was able to see two sides of Curacao from the top of the towering Queen Juliana Bridge spanning the St. Anna Bay. On one side was an industrial complex of shipyards and oil refineries, but on the other was historic Willemstad, two sides Punda (The Point) and Otrobanda (Other side), connected by the unique Queen Emma Bridge, a 124-year-old pontoon bridge.

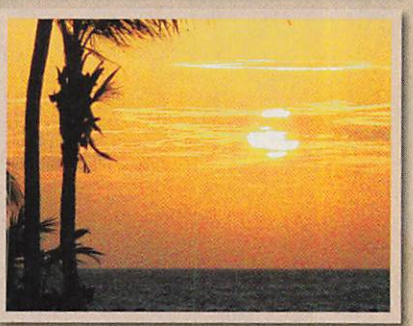
The pedestrian bridge is nicknamed "The Swinging Old Lady" because it opens like a gate, allowing large ships to pass through the city's deep, natural channel.

Part of the Netherlands Antilles, Curacao has a Dutch influence found throughout in street names, architecture, education, history and culture. It's even found in Papiamentu, the native dialect of Curacao. Papiamentu combines words from Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, and Creole, and is considered the language of the people.

School in Curacao is conducted in Dutch, and most residents - including Jurrjens - speak at least three more languages, including English, Spanish and, of course, Papiamentu. The country is currently on the road to independence and will be autonomous as of Oct. 10 (10/10/10).

Jair parked in the Otrobanda, and we walked across the Queen Emma Bridge to stroll the Punda district. The buildings look like those along the canals in Holland, narrow buildings joined with roofs of varying heights. But unlike those in Holland, these buildings are painted vivid colors - yellow, aqua, green and brick red - and are often adorned with accents of contrasting color.

Combined with the clear blue water of the channel, the effect is breathtaking and unique. Many of the buildings in the Punda and Otrabanda date from the late 1700s and early 1800s.



ChopTalk's Patty Rasmussen (lower left) found plenty of things to enjoy in Curacao, including the unique architecture and the fabulous sunsets.

Once in Punda, we walked to the floating market, a group of boats from Venezuela, docked along the Sha Caprileskade and filled with fresh produce and spices for sale. I bought two bananas for 1 guilder, roughly $1.77.

A little further down from the floating market was the Marche Bieu, a popular restaurant housed in a long wooden building that looks like a picnic pavilion. Just one meal a day, the noon meal, is served. Women begin cooking early in the morning, and by noon, the place is packed with locals and tourists, ready to eat everything from goat stew and potatoes to fried mero (fish) with beans and rice. The food is generally washed down with Coca-Cola or some other type of soda.

Jair is recognized on the streets, but in a gracious way, and he is equally humble and gracious in return. He shouts or acknowledges greetings to people he knows and nods or waves to those who recognize him without speaking.

For an island native, Jair isn't much for the beach, though the beaches are spectacular with soft, white sand and clear, turquoise water. Diving, snorkeling and windsurfing are popular activities.

A fascinating sight that combines history and scenery are the Salt Pens in the area of the Landhuis or Plantations. These large flooded plains were once used as salt "farms," for lack of a better description.

Working the pens was one of the most difficult slave tasks on the islands. The pens were flooded with salt water, then dried in the blazing sun. The slaves hacked at the dried salt for shipment back to Holland. Though not a pleasant memory for the island, the slave trade was a major source of revenue for the Dutch who colonized the island.

The same deep channel that today allows for container and cargo vessels to deliver wares, once made way for ships carrying slaves from Africa until the practice was banned in 1863. A memorial to the slaves stands by the salt pens where bright pink wild flamingos forage for food.

To cap every day, I'd go to the beach at the Lion's Dive and Beach Resort where I stayed. The sunsets were never the same. One evening, the day left in a blaze of gold light. The next day, the sunset sky was pink and purple.

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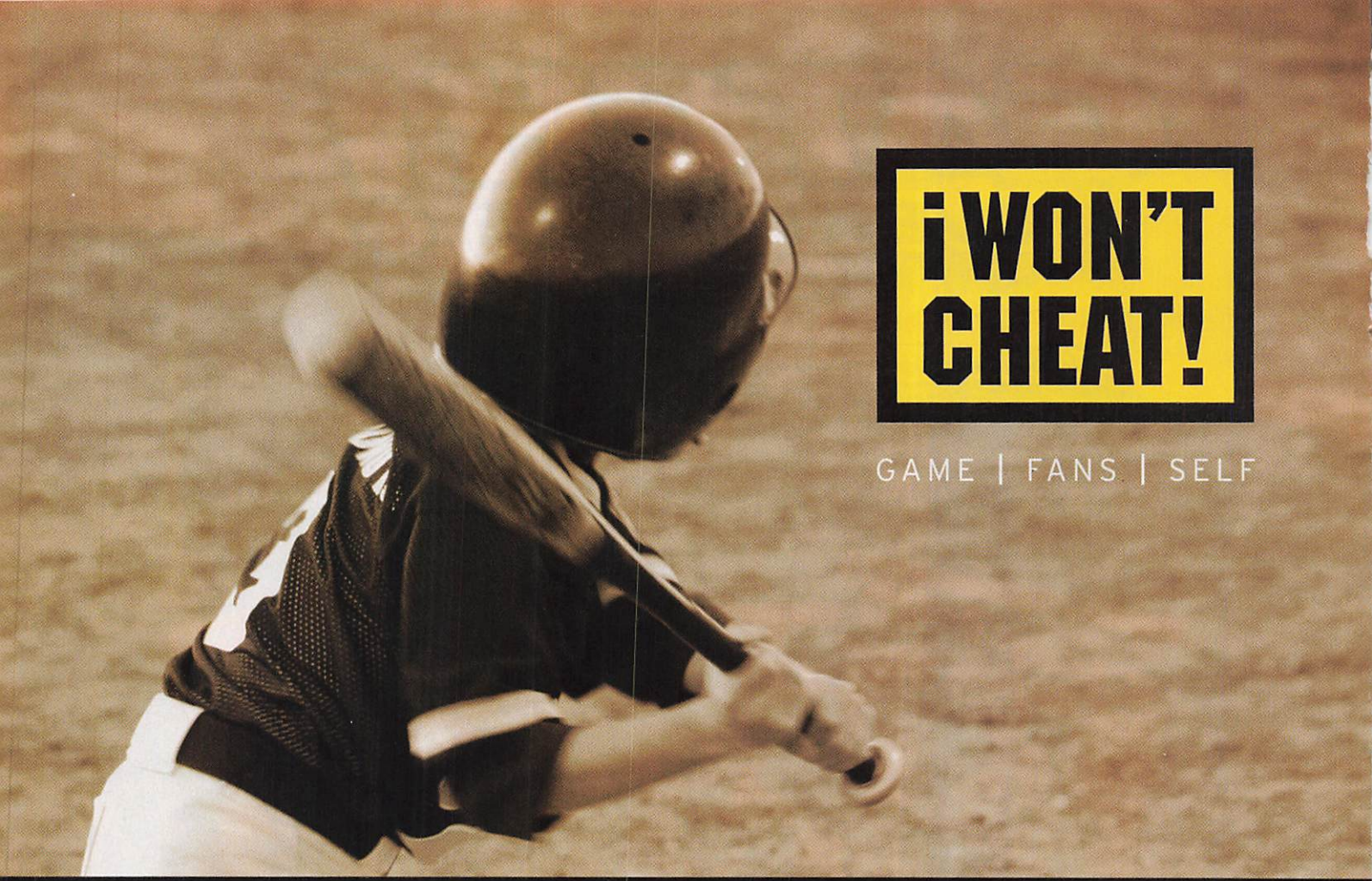
September 2005	Jeff Francoeur
October 2005	Andruw Jones
November 2005	Brian McCann
December 2005	Andruw Jones
January 2006	Edgar Renteria
February 2006	Niekro, Aaron, Lemaster
March 2006	LaRoche Family
April 2006	Andruw, Smoltz, Chipper
May 2006	Chris Reitsma
June 2006	Francoeur's Slam
July 2006	Edgar Renteria
August 2006	Brian McCann
September 2006	Bob Wickman
October 2006	John Smoltz

November 2006	Bobby Cox
December 2006	Jeff Francoeur
January 2007	Rafael Soriano
February 2007	Spring Training
March 2007	Mike Gonzalez
April 2007	Andruw Jones (Sold Out)
May 2007	Hubbard & Johnson (Sold Out)
June 2007	John Smoltz
July 2007	Diaz & Harris
August 2007	Edgar Renteria
September 2007	Mark Teixeira
October 2007	Jeff Francoeur
November 2007	Chipper Jones
December 2007	John Smoltz
January 2008	Tom Glavine
February 2008	Tim Hudson
March 2008	Mark Kotsay
April 2008	Teixeira & Jones
May 2008	Brian McCann
June 2008	Jair Jurrjens

July 2008	Chipper Jones
August 2008	McCann & Jones
September 2008	Skip Caray
October 2008	Brian McCann
November 2008	Chipper Jones
December 2008	Pete Van Wieren
January 2009	Frank Wren
February 2009	Hank Aaron
March 2009	Derek Lowe
April 2009	Vazquez, Lowe & Kawakami
May 2009	Bobby Cox & Chipper Jones
June 2009	Jeff Francoeur
July 2009	Nate McLouth
August 2009	Tommy Hanson
September 2009	Martin Prado
October 2009	Yunel Escobar
November 2009	Peter Moylan
December 2009	Jason Heyward
January 2010	Billy Wagner



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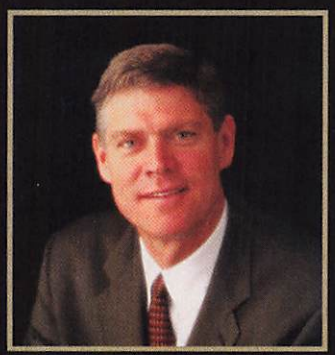

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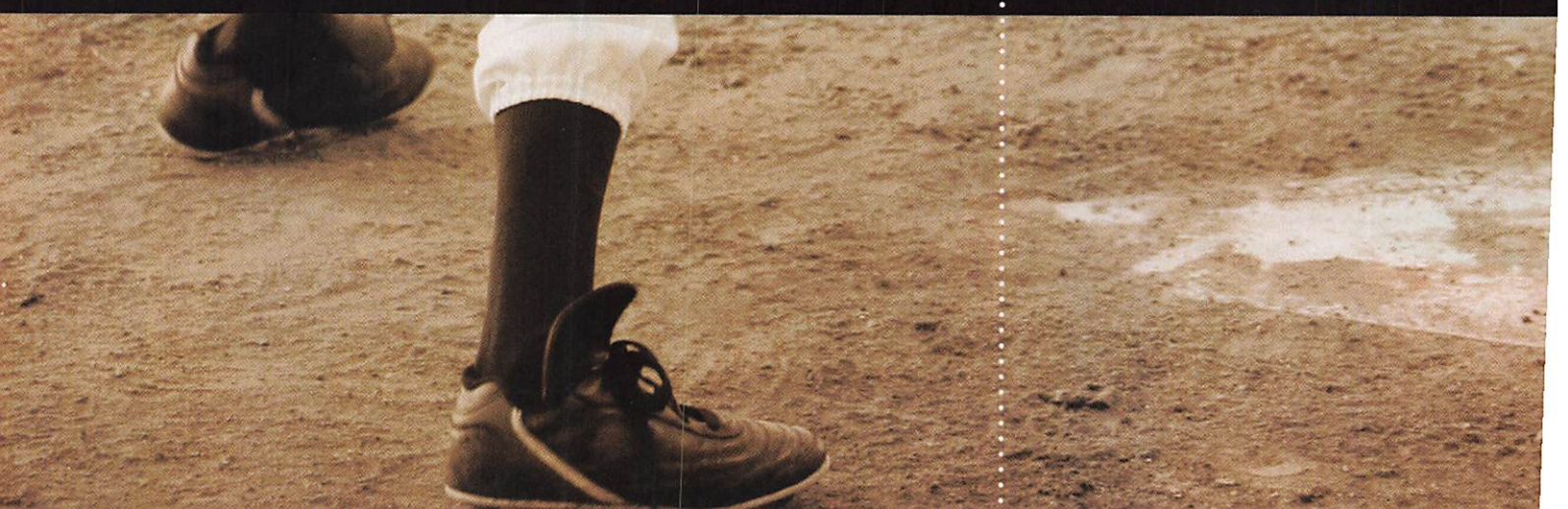


STAT PARADE 2009

INDIVIDUAL BATTING (Longest/Most)

Hitting Streak	14 games	Kotchman, July 2-22
Home Run Streak	3 games	LaRoche, Aug. 17-19
RBI Streak	5 games	McCann & Anderson
Runs, Game	4	Diaz, & LaRoche
Hits, Game	4 (10 times)	Last: Prado, Oct. 2 vs. Wash.
Total Bases, Game	12	C. Jones & LaRoche
Doubles, Game	3 (five times)	Last: Diaz, 8/28 at Phil.
Home Runs, Game	2 (five times)	Last: LaRoche, Sept. 15 vs. Mets
Extra-Base Hits, Game	4	LaRoche, Sept. 15 vs. Mets
Runs Batted In, Game	5 (twice)	Last: McCann, Aug. 23 vs. Fla.
Walks, Game	4 (three times)	Last: McLouth, July 19 vs. Mets

CLUB BATTING (Most)

Runs, Game	15	Aug. 19 at Mets
Runs, Game, Both Clubs	23	April 8 at Phil. (10 inn.)
Runs, Inning	9	May 20 vs. Colo. (4th)
Hits, Game	18	Aug. 19 at Mets
Hits, Game, Both Clubs	30	Aug. 26 vs. San Diego
Hits, Inning	7	Aug. 19 at Mets (2nd)
Total Bases, Game	30	Aug. 19 at Mets
At-Bats, Game	55	Oct. 4 vs. Wash. (15 inn.)
At-Bats, Game (9 inn.)	45	Aug. 19 at Mets
Doubles, Game	7 (three times)	Last: July 17 vs. Mets
Home Runs, Game	4 (last)	Aug. 29 at Phil.
Home Runs, Game, Both Clubs	6	Sept. 18 vs. Phil.
Home Runs, Inning	2 (seven times)	Last: Aug. 19 at Mets (6th)
Extra-Base Hits, Game	9 (twice)	Last: May 31 at Ariz.
Walks, Game	11	Sept. 28 vs. Fla.
Strikeouts, Game	16	Sept. 30 vs. Fla.
Stolen Bases, Game	3 (four times)	Last: Aug. 22 vs. Fla.
Left on Base, Game	14 (twice)	Aug. 27 vs. San Diego (10 innings)

INDIVIDUAL PITCHING (Most/Longest)

Innings, Game, Starter	9, Vazquez (twice)	Last: Sept. 25 at Wash.
Innings, Game, Reliever	4 (four times)	Last: Kawakami, Sept. 21 at Mets
Strikeouts, Game, Starter	12 (twice)	Vazquez (April 14 & June 11)
Strikeouts, Game, Reliever	5 (twice)	Last: Medlen, Aug. 18 at Mets
Consecutive Scoreless IP (Starter)	26	Hanson, June 12-July 4
Consecutive Scoreless IP (Reliever)	14.1	MoylanJuly 24-Aug. 26
Consecutive Homerless IP	73	Moylan, April 8-Oct. 4
Winning Streak, Starter	5 games (five times)	Last: Vazquez, Aug. 27-Sept. 25
Winning Streak, Reliever	5 games	Moylan, June 30-Oct. 4

CLUB PITCHING (Most)

Runs Allowed, Game	12 (three times)	Last: Aug. 26 vs. San Diego
Runs Allowed, Inning	8 (twice)	Last: Aug. 18 at Mets (4th)
Strikeouts, Game	16	Aug. 25 vs. San Diego
Walks Allowed, Game	10	April 8 at Phil.
Hits Allowed, Game	19	Aug. 2 vs. Dodgers
Home Runs Allowed, Game	4	Sept. 18 vs. Phi.
Consecutive Homerless IP	80	July 12 (8th) - July 24 (5th)

STOLEN BASES

Player	2B SB-ATT	3B SB-ATT	Total SB-ATT
Diaz	12-15	0-2	12-17 (71%)
McLouth	12-17	0-1	12-18 (67%)
Johnson	7-9	-	7-9 (78%)
Francoeur	5-6	-	5-6 (83%)
Escobar	5-9	-	5-9 (56%)
C. Jones	4-5	-	4-5 (80%)
McCann	4-5	-	4-5 (80%)
Blanco	2-2	-	2-2 (100%)
Infante	2-2	-	2-2 (100%)
Schafer	2-3	-	2-3 (67%)
Prado	1-4	-	1-4 (25%)
Team	56-80	2-4	58-84 (69%)

QUALITY STARTS

Jurrjens	25
Vazquez	22
Lowe	21
Kawakami	13
Hanson	12
Hudson	4

AVG. IP/START

Vazquez	7
Jurrjens	6.1
Hanson	6
Hudson	6
Lowe	5.2
Kawakami	5.2

RUN SUPPORT*

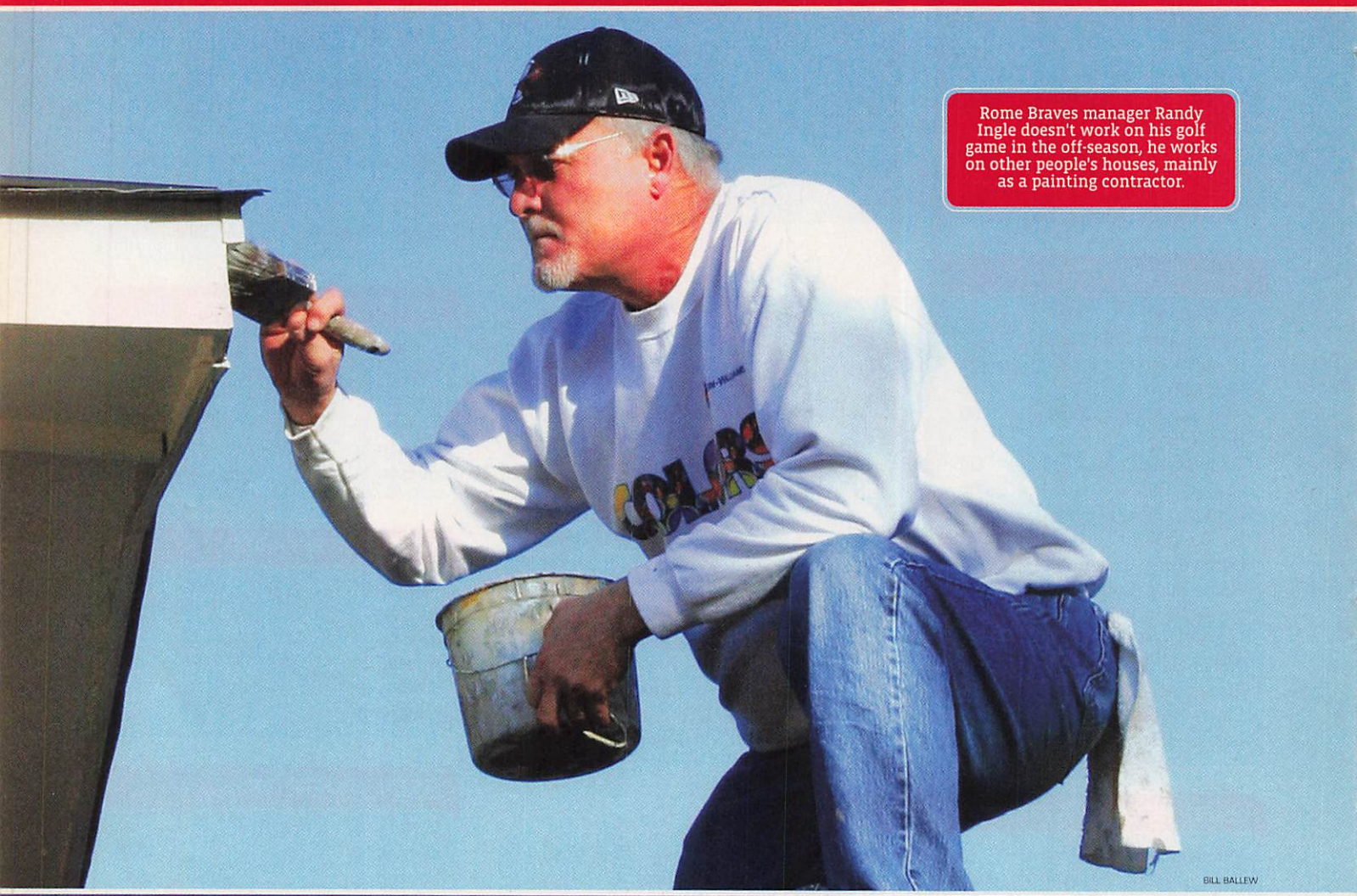
Lowe	4
Vazquez	3.9
Hanson	3.8
Medlen	3.5
Jurrjens	3.1
Hudson	2.6
Kawakami	2.1

* While in game

TEAM RECORD IN STARTS

Lowe	21-13 (.618)
Hanson	12-9 (.571)
Vazquez	18-14 (.563)
Jurrjens	17-17 (.500)
Kawakami	12-13 (.480)
Hudson	3-4 (.429)
Reyes	2-3 (.400)
Medlen	1-3 (.250)

PAINTING THE CORNERS...



Rome Braves manager Randy Ingle doesn't work on his golf game in the off-season, he works on other people's houses, mainly as a painting contractor.

BILL BALLEW

Rome Manager Randy Ingle Doesn't Know The Meaning Of "Off-Season"

BY BILL BALLEW

THE SNOW AND FREEZING TEMPERATURES that inundated the western half of North Carolina in December and early January also wreaked havoc with Randy Ingle's schedule. The Rome Braves manager has more work to do in his hometown of Forest City than he can handle, all the while his reporting date to the balmy environs of spring training is bearing down on him.

"The weather's been so cold, I can't get outside to do what I need to do," Ingle said. "There's a doctor who needs his barn pressure-washed and stained. I've got a couple of other big outside jobs I need to do if the weather will cooperate. But I've been fortunate this year by staying busy because the economy has really been bad around here."

In many ways, the 52-year-old Ingle has two identities. During the spring and summer, the former All-American at Appalachian State University molds the boys who would be Atlanta Braves during their first full seasons at the professional level. The coming season will be his fifth at Rome, Atlanta's Class-A affiliate in the South Atlantic League, and his 19th as a manager in the organization. But come fall and winter, he goes from working full-time with ballplayers and baseballs to dealing with paint and primer... with a little hardball mixed in.

"I have to be doing something. I can't just sit at home," said Ingle, the Braves' Minor League Manager of the Year in 1996 and '97. "And it's something I really enjoy doing. Most people

AND EVERYTHING ELSE

can't stand to paint. They want to get in a hurry and get it over with. You need to have patience. To me, it's relaxing. I don't mind all the prep work - the sanding, the caulking, the priming, the scraping. That's 80 percent of the job. And I do everything. I spray, I roll, I brush. I enjoy the work and listening to the radio and then seeing the finished product. It's rewarding."

Ingle learned how to paint while in high school when he worked during the summers for his uncle's construction company. He then took it to another level shortly after he and his wife, Bebe, were married in January 1981. They went early to spring training in West Palm Beach, Fla., where they lived with pitcher Greg Field for several weeks.

"Greg had a painting business," Ingle said. "I worked with him painting high-rise condos. After that season, I decided I could do something like that here. It's all been word-of-mouth. Every year I have people I can't get to before I go to spring training who will wait for me until after the season."

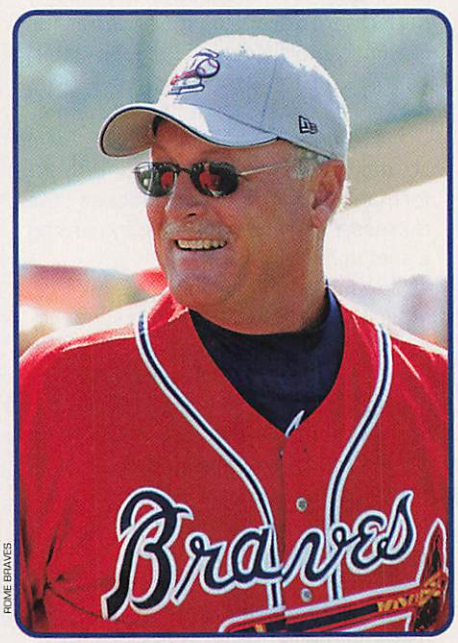
It helps, naturally, when most everyone in town knows your name. Yet those relationships only intensify Ingle's relentless work ethic. An admitted perfectionist, he has little help, no matter the size of the job, other than his 26-year-old son, Taylor, who lends a hand two days a week.

"As I've gotten older, I can't do a few things, but I've also gotten smarter," Ingle said. "I've been on top of a 40-foot ladder that was sitting on the back of a pick-up truck, trying to get to a spot near the roof. I want to do the job right. And that's what I like about my son working with me. He's the same way. We take pride in doing the best job possible."

Hard work is something Ingle is accustomed to doing. He says the most dangerous work he did came on the midnight shift at the shipyard in Savannah after his first two seasons in professional baseball. He and a teammate worked with some rough characters in a job that was physically demanding.

The most memorable job Ingle had occurred while making the transition between playing and coaching in 1986. He was supposed to serve as a player/coach at Double-A Greenville in 1987, but that was before he spoke with a local representative for Electrolux.

"I came home after the season, had babies, and I had to find a job," said Ingle, an infielder in the Braves' farm system from 1979-87. "I went to one interview and saw all these vacuum cleaners and thought, 'This isn't for me.' I wound up going on an appointment with the guy, and he convinced me to take one home. I wound up selling it to my neighbor. I didn't even know how to write up a contract."



RON E BRAVES

Ingle, 52, is a former infielder in the Braves' farm system and managed Greenville to the Southern League Championship in 1997.

The immediate success led Ingle to give the job a try. Over the next three weeks, he sold a company-record 54 units and won a plethora of prizes, including a television, microwave, pearl necklace and vacation to Myrtle Beach.

Ingle's performance was so impressive that the company wanted to make him an area sales manager. He contemplated the offer before telling Hank Aaron, then the Braves' farm director, what he needed to earn in order to continue his fledgling career as a coach.

"I knew the Braves didn't give those kinds of raises, but Hank called back the next day and said okay," Ingle said. "After I spoke with him, I went into the living room and told my wife, 'I'm going back to ball.' That was 23 years ago, and I'm still doing what I love."

Even when the weather limits his painting, Ingle isn't catching up on his sleep. He gives hitting and pitching lessons on a regular basis to more than a dozen players, ranging from first-graders to high school students. For 16 years, he hosted a Winter Ball Camp at the Cool Springs Gym that drew an average of 150 kids annually. Ingle attracted several big names to serve as instructors, including Kevin Millwood, Jeff Francoeur and Kyle Davies and fellow coaches Jose Alvarez, Mel Roberts and Rick Adair.

"When I first started doing it, I charged $15, but I finally had to go up to $20," Ingle said. "Every kid received a nice t-shirt, a prize, lunch, all the instruction and all the autographs. I always had to set everything up both outside and inside, because of the weather around here in late January and early February. It was a ton of work, but we had a blast."

Most minor league managers and coaches keep busy in the off-season by giving lessons to youngsters. Others improve their golf games and spend time with family. Myrtle Beach manager Rocket Wheeler even hits the high seas for some shrimping near his home in Pawleys Island, S.C.

Ingle, meanwhile, admits the money he earns comes in handy. After all, he has three dogs to feed in addition to a wedding for his daughter, Meghan, to help pay for in late September. Yet even if Ingle was fortunate enough to win the lottery, chances are life wouldn't be much different.

"It really is like having two different lives," Ingle said. "I'm gone for six months with baseball, and then I'm home for about the same amount of time. But I keep so busy that my wife likes to say she sees me more during the season than the off-season."

BY BILL BALLEW

YOUNG EARNS TEAM MVP AWARD, MAKES GREAT STRIDES IN MEXICO

PHOTOS: TOM PRIDDY

Hitting leadoff and playing center field, Matt Young finished eighth in the league with a .315 batting average and spurred Navojoa to an unexpected playoff berth.

MATT YOUNG thought he had experienced most everything baseball has to offer during his first five years in the Braves organization. He discovered how naïve those beliefs were during his recent three-month stint playing winter ball in the Mexican Pacific League.

"In Navojoa, we were the only white guys, the only Americans there," said Young, referring to himself and teammates Tim Gustafson, Brett Butts and Stephen Marek. "It was definitely like lions at the zoo every time we walked somewhere. People looked at us like we were from another planet."

It's not that the situation made Young feel uncomfortable. Located in northwestern Mexico along the Gulf of California, Navojoa is a quiet commercial and manufacturing city of about 145,000 people. Young and the rest of the imports of the Mayos baseball team stayed in the same hotel, where all the foreign players had private rooms, an uncommon luxury compared to the typical double-occupancy arrangements in the minor leagues. The team also loaned the players a vehicle - a 1986 Chevrolet Suburban - which meant Young, and his teammates were like a family on vacation.

Helping the situation was Young's performance on the field. Serving as the Mayos' centerfielder and leadoff hitter, he became the sparkplug for a team that finished last in batting in the eight-team league with a .254 average. Even so, thanks in large part to Young's performance, the Mayos shocked the masses, including their fans, by earning a spot in the playoffs.

"I really don't know how to explain it, other than to say I just felt really comfortable at the plate down there," said Young, who reached Triple-A Gwinnett during the latter half of the 2009 season after starting the season at Double-A Mississippi for the fourth year. "Some of it was a carryover from the season, which is the same thing I felt when I went to Arizona to play in the fall league (in 2008). I was tired when I got there, but everything just seemed to slow down on the field after a week or two."

Young made his debut with Navojoa on Oct. 10 and went hitless in his first eight at-bats. Through five games, he had only three hits in 16 trips to the plate. He soon realized that pitching approaches in Mexico are quite different than in the United States, with frequent off-speed pitches and rare fastballs.

"I felt like I learned a lot," Young said. "Playing baseball in Mexico is totally different, and in hindsight it's nice to get out of your comfort zone. Being a leadoff hitter, you expect to see fastballs, but there they just throw you slop. The veteran guys down there know their repertoires and they know how to get batters out. The veteran pitchers on our team, most of them could speak broken English, and it was fun to pick their brains and learn from them. It made me a better hitter, because I was able to look for breaking balls and make adjustments."

To say Young learned from his early mistakes would be an understatement. The former standout at the University of New Mexico endeared himself to the Mayos' faithful with the same style of play that earned him "best hustler" honors in the Southern League last year. He became the cornerstone of the Navojoa lineup by hitting .315 (eighth in the league) with an on-base percentage of .435 (fourth). He also ranked second in the league with 21 stolen bases and 54 runs scored, and third with 30 extra-base hits, four triples and 45 walks. He contributed eight home runs and 32 RBIs, too.

By the end of the season, Young was like a rock star among the fans in

The 27-year-old Young, who signed as a non-drafted free agent in 2004 out of the University of New Mexico, has worked his way up to the Triple-A level of the Atlanta farm system.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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Navojoa. He also was named the team's most valuable player and was considered a strong candidate to earn similar recognition from the league.

"The team I was on is not a perennial powerhouse," Young said. "The fact that we made the playoffs was a big step for the entire city. It was exciting to be part of that. During the playoffs, the stadium filled up, and the crowd was electric. I can't imagine how playing in the playoffs in the big leagues must be if it's anything like it was in Mexico. The crowds and the atmosphere made for one of the most incredible experiences I've had playing this game."

Navojoa fell behind early in its playoff series with Hermosillo and trailed three games-to-none before the Mayos rallied to win two straight. Even though the team bowed out after losing the sixth game in the best-of-seven series on Jan. 9, the Mayos thrilled their fans and generated hope for additional success in the future. Young continued his strong play in the post-season by going 6-for-20 (.300) at the plate with four walks and five stolen bases.

"I improved as a baseball player, and I feel like I really grew up as a person," Young said. "I have so much more respect for what the Latin players have to go through in the United States. I couldn't order food because it was so hard. It's not the Spanish you learned in high school.

"But it really was a great experience. I believe it will help prepare me for that next step that I want to make, which is the big leagues. But even without looking at it from that standpoint, I'm really looking forward to going back next year... if they'll have me."

ORGANIZATIONAL NOTES

- **Matt Young** was one of the few foreign players to remain with the Mayos from start to finish of the Mexican Pacific League season. **Brett Butts** returned to the U.S. in early November, and outfielder **Concepcion Rodriguez** played his final game with Navojoa on Nov. 27 prior to going home to Panama. **Tim Gustafson** went 5-1 with a 2.93 ERA and pitched his last game on Dec. 4. **Stephen Marek** arrived on Nov. 28 and stayed for the remainder of the season, going 2-2 with a 2.38 ERA in 12 relief outings.

- In addition to Young, two other Braves had strong regular-season showings in

DOWN ON THE FARM

COLE ROHRBOUGH

DURABILITY PROVED TO BE A POSITIVE IN '09

EDITOR'S NOTE

After enduring an injury-plagued season at the Class-A level in 2008, Cole Rohrbough expected to make up for lost time last season, yet wound up struggling to a 6-8 record with a 5.77 ERA in 23 outings at Myrtle Beach. One of the top left-handed pitching prospects in the Atlanta organization, the 22-year-old Rohrbough is preparing for his fourth pro season after signing as a non-drafted free agent in 2007.

LAST YEAR was a very disappointing season for me, but I feel like I learned a lot. It was a season with a lot of trial and error. I had some problems, which I believe centered on not having the right game plan going into each start.

If there's one thing that needs to be questioned, it's my approach before a game. I was perfectly healthy. I was trying a bunch of different mechanics, but regardless, I should have pitched a lot better.

If I had stuck with one set of mechanics, would I have done better than I did? Probably. But the bottom line is I should have pitched better than I did, no matter what type of mechanical approaches they wanted me to try.

The lack of consistency I displayed was extremely frustrating. If you go back and look at my games, my number-one problem was giving up the big inning. I would shut them out for three, and then give up four or five runs in a single inning. I pitched very well at times, but it was disappointing that I wasn't able to do that with any consistency from start to start.

I think the biggest thing I learned last year that I'm going to be able to use in 2010 is taking a much simpler approach to the mound. The stats may not show it, but I feel like I threw the ball much better in my last few starts than I did over the rest of the season.

> "THE LACK OF CONSISTENCY I DISPLAYED FROM START TO START WAS EXTREMELY FRUSTRATING."

I was really comfortable over my last seven or eight starts with my game approach. I wasn't thinking about so many different things. Earlier in the season, I was always searching for answers instead of going pitch by pitch and executing the way I'm capable. I was too worried about things while they were happening and what I had to do to fix them.

There were some positive things I took from the season, beginning with my durability. After struggling with injuries throughout the 2008 season, I was able to handle the physical strains of pitching for the last four months.

Things didn't start out that way when I missed almost a month after pulling a hamstring during my first start of the year. At that point, I started to wonder why I had to get punished so harshly for every little thing I did wrong. It seemed like if I didn't do everything exactly right, it would turn into a worst-case scenario. Fortunately, from a physical standpoint, I was able to overcome that obstacle.

For the last seven or eight starts, the velocity of my fastball was harder than it was all year. My body felt strong from start to finish, so much so that, at the end of the year, I felt I could have pitched another half-season. I went to Instructional League, and my arm felt great for the entire month I was in Florida.

Durability is such a big factor for a starting pitcher, especially at the major league level, and I felt I showed that I am able to stay strong over a long period of time.

Right now I'm trying to get my mechanics dialed in before I start really throwing and doing some of the other off-season drills. I'm also trying to address why left-handed batters hit so well against me last year and working to make things more difficult for them.

But all in all, after making some progress late in the season and this fall, I'm really excited about spring training.

ATLANTA BRAVES

Gregor Blanco, who played 144 games for the Braves in 2008 but spent most of last year at Triple A and just 24 games with Atlanta, batted .304 in the Venezuelan Winter League.

winter ball. Outfielder **Gregor Blanco** hit .304 with 23 RBIs for La Guaira in the Venezuelan Winter League, while catcher **Orlando Mercado** posted a .337 batting average with 12 RBIs in 28 games with Carolina in the Puerto Rican Winter League.

The Braves added some power to the Triple-A Gwinnett roster by signing rightfielder **Mitch Jones** as a free agent. Jones led the minor leagues last year by hitting 35 home runs for Triple-A Albuquerque. The 32-year-old also received his first promotion to the major leagues when he hit .308 in eight games with the Los Angeles Dodgers during the latter half of June. Originally drafted and signed by the Yankees in the seventh round in 2000 out of Arizona State, Jones enters 2010 with 235 career home runs at the minor league level.

Pitcher **Ryne Reynoso** (Jan. '10 CT) was named the 2009 Athlete of the Year by the Idaho Mountain Express. Reynoso helped Wood River High School to its first and only baseball championship in 2003 prior to spending most of his career at Boston College playing outfield. This past season at Double-A Mississippi, Reynoso led the M-Braves with 148 innings pitched, 24 starts and a 3.47 ERA. He is expected to open the 2010 season in the Gwinnett rotation. Reynoso hosted a Winter Break Baseball Camp in Hailey, Idaho, over the holidays.

Coinciding with the promotion of **Tony DeMacio** to director of scouting last fall, the Braves made several changes within the scouting department. **John Flannery** and **Deron Rombach** are the new national cross checkers. **Tom Davis** will be the West Coast regional cross checker, **Steve Fleming** is the East Coast regional cross checker, and **James "Bump" Merriweather** will serve as the Southwest regional cross checker while also scouting Arizona and southern Nevada. **Bill Bliss** has been hired as the area supervisor for Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio. **Steve Leavitt** is the new supervisor for Southern California and Hawaii. In addition, Atlanta signed three new part-time scouts: **Lou Sanchez** (Florida), **Brendan Sagara** (Hawaii) and **Raul Gonzalez** (Panama).

The Myrtle Beach Pelicans hired **Tyler Maun** as the team's new director of broadcasting and media relations. A product of the University of Nebraska, Maun will handle the radio play-by-play duties for all Pelicans games in addition to media requests.

The Braves released pitchers **Adam Bullard**, **Casey Hodges** and **Dennis Accomando**, catcher **Dan Coury**, shortstops **Travis Adair**, **Chais Fuller** and **Chad Lundahl** and outfielders **Kuyaunnis Miles** and **Jon Mark Owings**.

The Danville Braves received an MiLBY award from Minor League Baseball as the best short-season team last year. The rookie-level club played in the Appalachian League's championship series for the fourth time in the past five years and won its second title since 2006 after finishing with a .691 regular-season winning percentage.

2010 SCHEDULE

DANVILLE BRAVES
APPALACHIAN LEAGUE
ROOKIE ADVANCED

LEGION FIELD AT DAN DANIEL PARK
(434) 797-3792
DBRAVES.COM

JUNE

22-24	at Princeton
25-27	at Bluefield
28-30	Elizabethton

JULY

1-3	Princeton
July 4-6	at Johnson City
July 7-9	Burlington
July 10-12	Pulaski
July 14-16	at Elizabethton
July 17-19	at Pulaski
July 20-22	Pulaski
July 23-25	Johnson City
July 26-28	at Bristol
July 29-31	at Princeton

AUGUST

1-3	Bluefield
5-7	at Kingsport
8	at Burlington
9-11	Bristol
12-14	at Bluefield
15-16	Burlington
17	at Burlington
19-21	Greeneville
22-24	Kingsport
25-27	at Greeneville
28-29	at Burlington
30-31	Burlington

ATLANTA
COMMUNITY
FOOD
BANK
SAVE
a child in your community from a life of food insecurity. You can help by making a donation to the Atlanta Community Food Bank. www.ACFB.org
UNFACTURER'S COUPON

TICKETS

TO PURCHASE TICKETS OR FOR TICKET INFORMATION, CALL (404) 577-9100 OR VISIT braves.com

INDIVIDUAL GAME TICKETS

No information was available at press time. Visit braves.com and watch future issues of ChopTalk for information as it is released.

SEASON TICKET PLANS

The following ticket plans are on sale. For more information, visit braves.com or call (404) 577-9100.

TYPE

***Added Value:** Save 20 percent by adding $10 to your game ticket, which is stored on the bar code for each game, for $8. The added value can be used at any concession stand. $10 is already included in the Henry Aaron and Club Level areas.

***755 Club:** A 755 Club membership is automatically included in Henry Aaron, Club Level and Club Pavilion areas.

***2-For-1:** 2-For-1 Season Tickets are available in rows 11 and higher in the Upper Box.

FULL SEASON (83 Games)

Level	*Type	Price
Henry Aaron Seats	Added Value/755 Club	$5,146
Dugout	Added Value	$5,146
	Regular	$4,482
Terrace	Added Value	$3,154
	Regular	$2,490
Field	Added Value	$3,486
	Regular	$2,822
Club	Added Value/755 Club	$3,154
Outfield Pavilion	Added Value	$1,826
	Regular	$1,162
Upper Box	2-For-1	$415
Terrace Reserved	Regular	$996
Field Reserved	Added Value	$1,826
	Regular	$1,162
Club Pavilion	755 Club	$1,162
Upper Pavilion	Added Value/755 Club	$1,826
	Regular	$249
Outfield Pavilion	Added Value	$1,092
	Regular	$756
Upper Box	Added Value	$798
	Regular	$462

HALF SEASON (42 Games+)

Level	*Type	Price
Field	Added Value	$1,848
	Regular	$1,512
Club	Added Value/755 Club	$1,764

WEEKENDS (30 Games+)

Level	*Type	Price
Field	Added Value	$1,320
	Regular	$1,080
Club	Added Value/755 Club	$1,260
Outfield	Added Value	$780
	Regular	$540
Upper Box	Added Value	$570
	Regular	$330

20-GAMES

DALE MURPHY PLAN

(Variety of Tuesday games and all Fridays)

Level	*Type	Price
Field	Added Value	$880
	Regular	$720
Club	Added Value/755 Club	$840

BOBBY COX PLAN

(Variety of Wednesday games and all Saturdays)

Level	*Type	Price
Field	Added Value	$880
	Regular	$720
Field-Early Cox	Adult	$640
Club	Added Value/755 Club	$840

PHIL NIEKRO PLAN

(Variety of Thursdays and all Sundays)

Level	*Type	Price
Field	Added Value	$880
	Regular	$720
Club	Added Value/755 Club	$840

WARREN SPAHN PLAN

(Only weekday games and all day games)

Level	*Type	Price
Field	Added Value	$880
	Regular	$720
Club	Added Value/755 Club	$840

MUSEUM & TOUR INFO

The Ivan Allen Jr. Braves Museum features more than 600 Braves artifacts that trace the team's history from its beginnings in Boston (1871-1952) to Milwaukee (1953-65) to Atlanta (1966-present). It is located on the northwest side of Turner Field at aisle 134. The museum opens two and a half hours before each game and closes in the middle of the seventh inning. The museum is open year-round and is the starting point of one-hour guided tours of Turner Field. Tours leave on the hour.

Tour reservations are not necessary for individuals or groups of less than 20 people. Tickets can be purchased the day of the tour at the main ticket window. Free parking in the Green lot.

Admission to the museum during games is one token ($2) and $5 on non-game days. Tour tickets are $12 for adults, $7 for children and $10 for groups of 20 or more. Walk-up tickets can be purchased at the ticket window. Groups of 20 or more and school groups must make reservations two weeks in advance by calling (404) 614-2311.

HOURS OF OPERATION

OCTOBER - MARCH

Monday - Saturday	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
NOV. 27	CLOSED
Dec. 23-Jan. 2	CLOSED
JAN. 19	CLOSED

APRIL - OCTOBER

Monday - Saturday	9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Sunday	1 - 3 p.m.

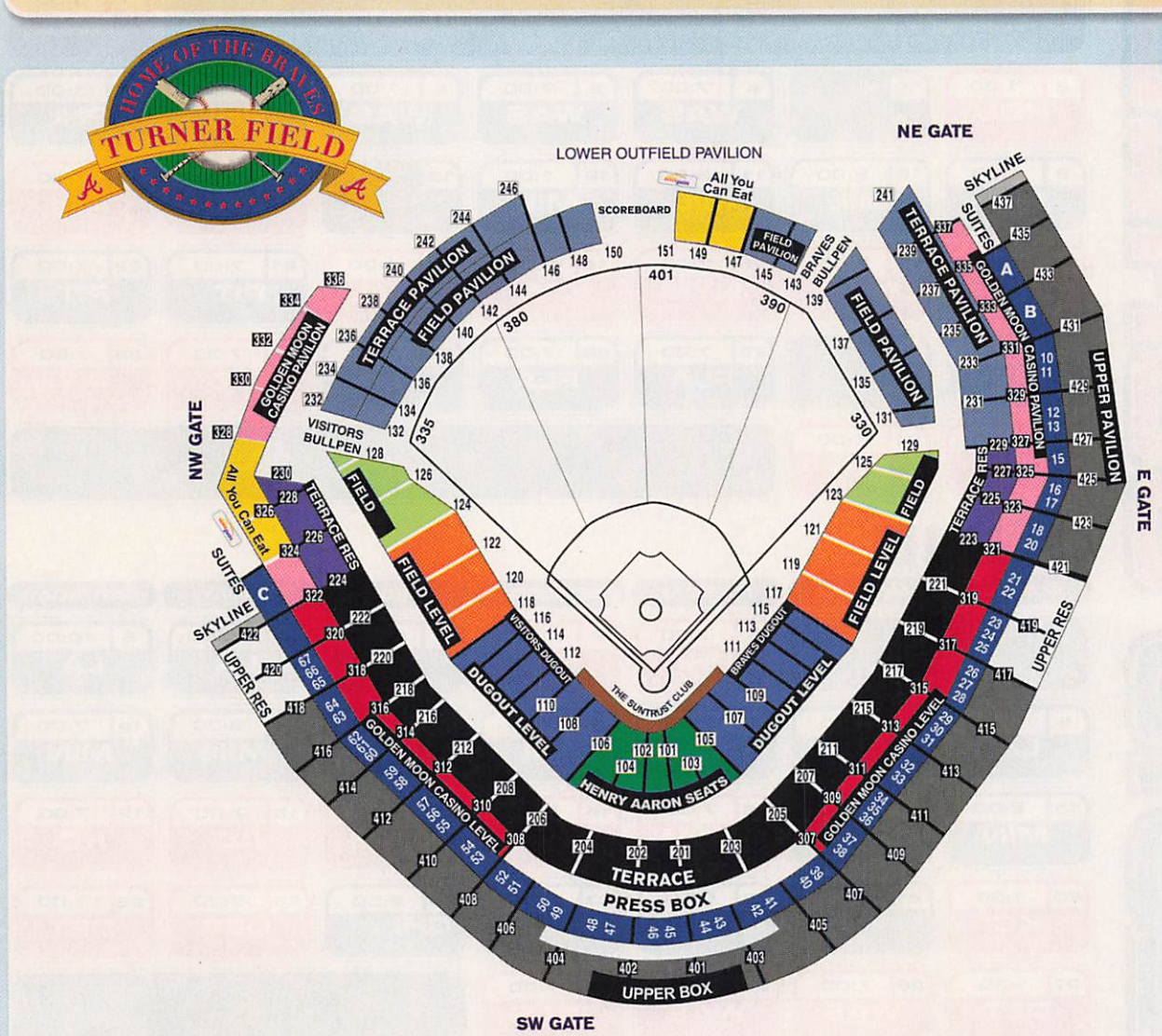
TOUR TICKETS

ADULTS	$12
CHILDREN 13 AND UNDER	$7
MILITARY	$7
GROUP	$10

SCHOOL GROUP PRICES

CHILDREN	$5
ADULTS	$7

*Subject to change
Tours not available when the Braves have afternoon home games



2010 SCHEDULE

HOME

AWAY

ROCK100.5 ATLANTA'S ROCK STATION

SPORTS RADIO 680 The Fan

SCHEDULE IS TENTATIVE AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE.
GAME TIMES AND BROADCAST INFORMATION TO BE DETERMINED.

APRIL

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 1:05 DET @Lakeland EXHIBITION	2 7:00 CHI AL EXHIBITION	3 1:00 CHI AL EXHIBITION
4	5 4:00 CHC	6	7 7:00 CHC	8 7:00 CHC	9 4:30 SF	10 10:00 SF
11 4:00 SF	12 6:30 SD	13	14 10:00 SD	15 6:30 SD	16 7:30 COL	17 7:00 COL
18 1:30 COL	19	20 7:00 PHI	21 7:00 PHI	22 7:00 PHI	23 7:00 NYM	24 1:00 NYM
25 8:00 NYM	26 8:00 STL	27 8:00 STL	28 8:00 STL	29 1:30 STL	30 7:30 HOU	

MAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 3:00 HOU
2 1:30 HOU	3	4 7:00 WAS	5 7:00 WAS	6 7:00 WAS	7 7:00 PHI	8 3:00 PHI
9 1:30 PHI	10 8:00 MIL	11 8:00 MIL	12 1:00 MIL	13	14 7:30 ARI	15 7:00 ARI
16 1:30 ARI	17 7:00 NYM	18 7:00 NYM	19 7:00 CIN	20 1:00 CIN	21 7:00 PIT	22 7:00 PIT
23 1:30 PIT	24	25 7:00 FLA	26 7:00 FLA	27 7:00 FLA	28 7:30 PIT	29 7:00 PIT
30 1:30 PIT	31 1:00 PHI					

JUNE

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 7:00 PHI	2 1:00 PHI	3 10:00 LA	4 10:00 LA	5 10:00 LA
6 LA	7 9:30 ARI	8 9:30 ARI	9 9:30 ARI	10 3:30 ARI	11 8:00 MIN	12 7:00 MIN
13 2:00 MIN	14	15 7:00 TAM	16 7:00 TAM	17 7:00 TAM	18 7:30 KC	19 7:00 KC
20 1:30 KC	21	22 8:00 CHI AL	23 8:00 CHI AL	24 2:00 CHI AL	25 7:30 DET	26 7:00 DET
27 1:30 DET	28 7:00 WAS	29 7:00 WAS	30 7:00 WAS			

2010 SCHEDULE

JULY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2 7:30 FLA	3 4:00 FLA
4 1:30 FLA	5 7:00 PHI	6 7:00 PHI	7 7:00 PHI	8	9 7:00 NY	10 4:00 NY
11 1:00 NY	12	13 ALL-STAR GAME ANAHEIM	14	15 7:00 MIL	16 7:30 MIL	17 7:00 MIL
18 1:30 MIL	19	20 7:00 SD	21 7:00 SD	22 1:00 SD	23 7:00 FLA	24 7:00 FLA
25 1:00 FLA	26	27 7:00 WAS	28 7:00 WAS	29 12:30 WAS	30 7:00 CIN	31 7:00 CIN

AUGUST

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 1:00 CIN	2 7:00 NYM	3 7:00 NYM	4 7:00 NYM	5 7:00 SF	6 7:30 SF	7 4:00 SF
8 1:30 SF	9 8:00 HOU	10 8:00 HOU	11 2:00 HOU	12	13 7:30 LA	14 7:00 LA
15 1:30 LA	16 7:00 LA	17 7:00 WAS	18 7:00 WAS	19 1:00 WAS	20 2:00 CHC	21 4:00 CHC
22 CHC	23 8:30 COL	24 8:30 COL	25 3:00 COL	26	27 7:30 FLA	28 4:00 FLA
29 1:30 FLA	30 7:00 NYM	31 7:00 NYM				

SEPT./OCT.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 7:00 NYM	2 7:00 NYM	3 7:00 FLA	4 7:00 FLA
5 1:00 FLA	6 1:30 PIT	7 7:00 PIT	8 7:00 PIT	9 7:00 STL	10 7:30 STL	11 4:00 STL
12 1:30 STL	13 7:00 WAS	14 7:00 WAS	15 12:00 WAS	16	17 7:00 NYM	18 4:00 NYM
19 1:00 NYM	20 7:00 PHI	21 7:00 PHI	22 7:00 PHI	23	24 7:00 WAS	25 1:00 WAS
26 1:30 WAS	27 7:00 FLA	28 7:00 FLA	29 7:00 FLA	30	1 7:30 PHI	2 7:00 PHI
3 1:30 PHI						

ROCK100.5 ATLANTA'S ROCK STATION

SPORTS RADIO 680 The Fan

HOME

AWAY

2010 SPRING TRAINING

MARCH/APRIL

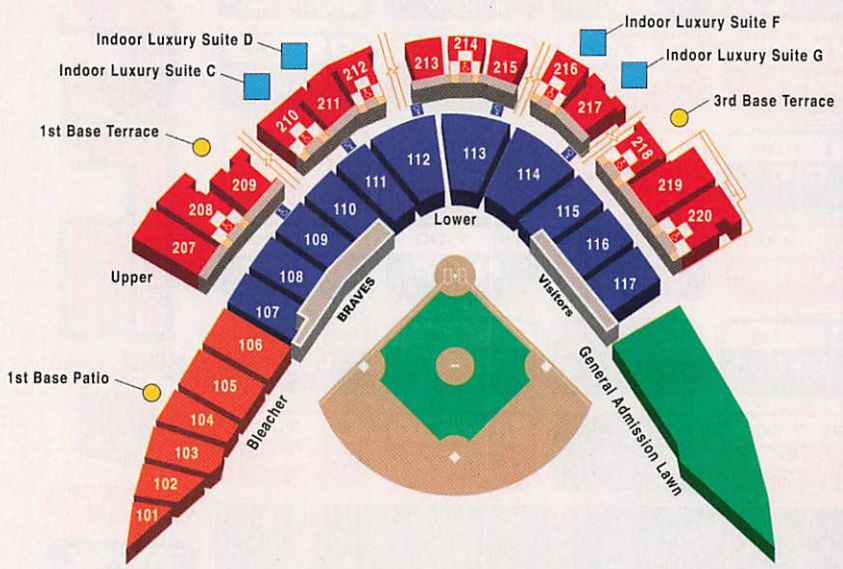
HOME | AWAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2 1:10 NYM @ PORT ST. LUCIE	3 1:05 NYM	4 1:05 PIT	5 1:05 WAS	6 1:05 HOU @ KISSIMMEE
7 1:05 HOU	8 1:05 DET @ LAKELAND	9 7:05 PHI	10 1:05 NYM	11 7:05 NYY @ TAMPA	12 1:05 PIT	13 1:05 TOR
14 1:05 HOU/TOR SS @ KISSIMMEE/DUNEDIN	15 7:05 WAS @ VIERA	16 1:05 FLA	17 1:05 FLA @ JUPITER	18 1:05 STL @ JUPITER	19 6:05 DET	20 1:05 TOR @ DUNEDIN
21 1:05 STL	22	23 1:10 NYM @ PORT ST. LUCIE	24 1:05 PHI	25 1:05 PIT @ BRADENTON	26 1:05 DET	27 1:05 WAS
28 1:05 WAS @ VIERA	29 1:05 PHI @ CLEARWATER	30 1:05 NYY	31 1:05 HOU	1 1:05 DET @ LAKELAND		

- Home games at Champion Stadium, ESPN Wide World of Sports in Lake Buena Vista, Fla.
- All times Eastern and subject to change.
- Broadcast details to be announced.

Dates, times and opponents are subject to change.

CHAMPION STADIUM AT ESPN WIDE WORLD OF SPORTS SEATING DIAGRAM



INDIVIDUAL TICKETS*

Single game tickets are on sale via Ticketmaster (1-800-745-3000), Ticketmaster.com, Braves.com, and at the ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex Box Office (Mon.-Sat., 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday 11 a.m.-3 p.m).

$28-$39 - Lower Level Reserved
$24-$33 - Upper Level Reserved
$24-$33 - Bleacher Level Reserved
$15-$19 - General Admission Lawn

* Individual game ticket prices vary by game day and opponent.

GROUP TICKETS

Groups of 10 or more should call (407) 939-GAME (4263) as soon as possible to reserve the best possible seat location and to avoid sellouts.

ON-FIELD SPECTATOR EXPERIENCE

PRICE - $80 PER PERSON

Exclusive pre-game On-Field Spectator Experience allows fans on the field behind home plate to watch the Braves and their opponents warm up. Limited availability. Warmups run from 10:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for games starting at 1:05 p.m., and from 4:15 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. for games starting at 7:05 p.m. Batting practice times are subject to change without notice.

SEASON TICKETS*

$400 - LOWER LEVEL RESERVED
$320 - UPPER LEVEL/BLEACHER RESERVED

Includes:
* 16 Games vs. opponents including the World Champion Yankees (Mar. 30) and the National League champion Phillies (Mar. 9 & 24).

* Invitation to an exclusive event at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex with Atlanta Braves players.

* Opportunity to purchase additional single game tickets before they go on sale to the public.

* General admission pass valid for Atlanta Braves practice sessions, excluding game days (valid Feb. 14-April 1).

* Preferred parking option (subject to availability) - $80 for spring training season.

* Exclusive season ticket holder stadium entrance.

* Complimentary annual golf membership at Walt Disney World Courses.

SUITES AND HOSPITALITY

Groups ranging in size from 15 to 300 fans can rent a variety of indoor and outdoor locations, ranging from Climate-Controlled Indoor Luxury Suites (15 to 40 fans) to Open Air Suites (40 fans) and Tented Patio with Stadium Seating (150 to 300 fans). Call (407) 939-GAME (4263) for information.

MINI PLANS

6 GAMES - $170

Sunday, Mar. 7	Astros
Tuesday, Mar. 9	Phillies
Saturday, Mar. 13	Blue Jays
Friday, Mar. 19	Tigers
Sunday, Mar. 21	Cardinals
Saturday, Mar. 27	Nationals

1ST HALF/3 GAMES - $78

Wednesday, Mar. 10	Mets
Friday, Mar. 12	Pirates
Saturday, Mar. 13	Blue Jays

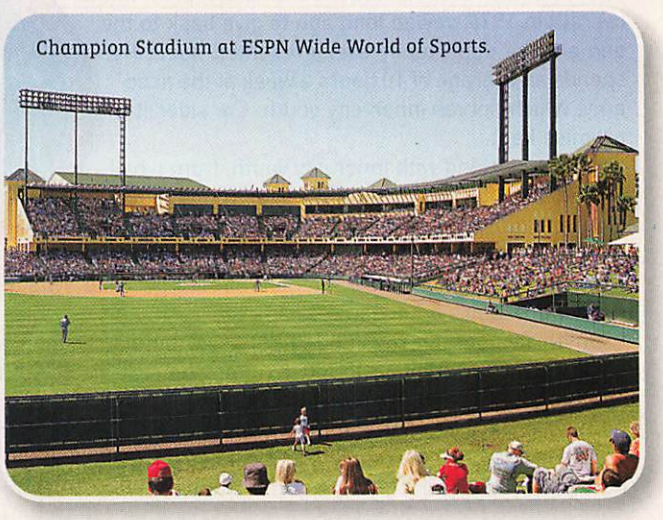
2ND HALF/3 GAMES - $83

Saturday, Mar. 27	Nationals
Tuesday, Mar. 30	Yankees
Wednesday, Mar. 31	Astros

(Mini Plan seats are located in selected Upper Level Reserved or Bleacher Reserved sections.)

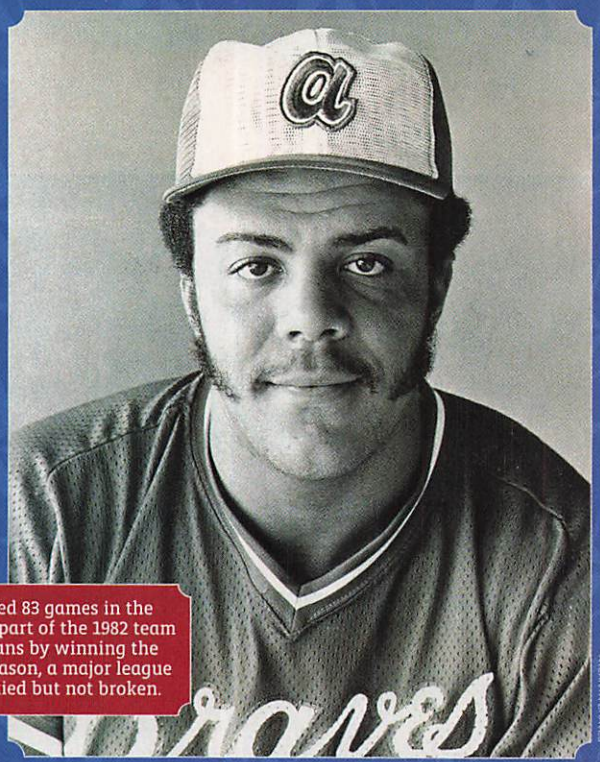
CONTACT

For more information on tickets and the schedule, visit disneysports.com/atlantabraves or call (407) 939-GAME (4263).



Champion Stadium at ESPN Wide World of Sports.

SPECIAL



ATLANTA BRAVES

Though he only played 83 games in the majors, Ken Smith was part of the 1982 team that thrilled Braves fans by winning the first 13 games of the season, a major league record that has been tied but not broken.

FIRST-ROUNDER

Former Top Draft Pick Ken Smith Creates Non-Profit Group To Teach Baseball In Memphis

BY BRIAN KNAPP

BY DAY, Ken Smith balances the ups and downs of the automotive industry as a sales consultant for Bluff City Jaguar/Land Rover in Memphis, Tenn. By some nights, he channels his baseball knowledge and experience into the Tri-City Baseball Academy, a non-profit organization he helped establish.

Smith, the Braves' first-round draft pick (third overall) in 1976, vowed long ago to give back to the game if the opportunity ever presented itself. He spends an average of 10 hours a week at the academy, which serves inner-city youth. Consider it a promise kept.

"We're working with inner city youth, from t-ball to high school," Smith said. "It's year-round, but we focus on the spring and summer. We want to keep the interest of inner-city kids in baseball. Once they gain an understanding, and we talk to them about how it's played, they realize baseball's a fun game."

Smith focuses on the fundamentals of hitting, fielding and baserunning, in addition to touching on the rich history of the sport in his teaching. He estimates "a couple hundred" children have become involved in the program since its 2008 inception.

"It has been a great response," Smith said. "A lot of churches have gotten involved. The city's gotten involved. When I was coming up, the biggest thing was that people who were older took the time with me. I always promised myself when I got older that I'd help out in some capacity."

His career keeps him busy, too. Smith has worked for the auto dealership since 1991, not long after he made Memphis home, serving as sales and finance manager, in addition to other duties. The 51-year-old former first baseman/outfielder initially developed an interest in the industry during the time he spent in Atlanta.

"I enjoy meeting people," Smith said. "In the auto industry, there's always something new all the time. I do a little bit of all of it. It's a people-oriented business."

Like most other businesses, the automotive industry felt the pinch of the current recession, though Smith thinks most dealerships kept their heads above water.

"When the economy had its pitfall," he said, "the auto industry slowed down some, but not as bad as some other industries."

Smith and his wife, Rene, have two sons. The Youngstown, Ohio, native has lived in Memphis for the past two decades. The lifestyle there, a mixture of business and leisure, big-city appeal and small-town feel, suits him well.

"It's scenic but not too congested," Smith said. "It has a little bit of everything to offer – great music. It's a great town."

Smith developed his love for the South as a member of the Braves. A career .259 hitter in the minor leagues, he debuted in Atlanta in 1981 and spent his entire three-year career there. He played in 48 games and batted .293 (career-high 41 at-bats) for the 1982 division champions, though he never received a crack at a full-time job, his path blocked by veteran players such as Claudell Washington and Bob Watson.

"It was fantastic," Smith said. "How many people can actually say they played in the major leagues and can say they played in a city like Atlanta?"

Though the fanfare of being a first-round draft choice surrounded him, Smith served primarily as a late-inning defensive replacement and pinch-hitter. He batted only 56 times in 83 career games (.268/1 HR/5 RBIs) but has no regrets about the turn his career took.

"I didn't get to stay long, but I can always say I did make it to the major leagues," said Smith, who played three more years in the minors after his last major league game in 1983. "In sports, a lot of times it boils down to the right place and the right time. Things happen. I always tried to get the job done – whatever that called for. I was given the opportunity to play in the major leagues, and I'm very thankful for that."

Smith, at age 24, made the team out of spring training in 1982 and was part of one of the most riveting periods in Atlanta Braves history. That team roared out of the gates and rattled off 13 consecutive victories to start the season. The Braves went on to win 89 games and the National League West division under first-year manager Joe Torre.

"It was a good team," said Smith. "To be a part of that, to win 13 games in a row to start the season was just phenomenal."

Drafted ahead of Hall of Famers Rickey Henderson, Ozzie Smith and Wade Boggs in 1976, Smith was granted free agency by Atlanta after the '83 season, signed back with the Braves for two more years on the farm, and finished his pro career in the Baltimore farm system in 1986. He didn't get a chance to re-enter the game at the coaching or executive level.

"I thought about that, but the opportunity never presented itself," Smith said. "As the years went by, it just never materialized."

PRESERVE '90s GLORY WITH CARDBOARD

WHILE IT MAY seem difficult to believe, several of the key players from the 1990s Braves have now retired. Those still playing will soon join them. Baseball cards make a great way to keep those memories alive.

When players such as Greg Maddux, Tom Glavine, John Smoltz and David Justice reached the big leagues from 1986 through 1989, several baseball card manufacturers competed during an era of overproduction. So, their cards lack the value of stars from a decade or two earlier.

Nevertheless, key players from those great Braves teams have still become a hit with collectors. Although Justice spent half his career playing for other clubs, his cards draw considerable interest.

"Justice, as a former Rookie-of-the-Year (1990), was quite popular during his early years with the Braves," said Chris Olds, editor for Beckett Baseball and Beckett Graded Card Investor. "He was one of the most popular rookies from the 1990 class, though guys like Sammy Sosa and Frank Thomas later surpassed him. His 1990 Upper Deck rookie card, for example, can be found for less than $1 these days. He's a good example of a player who is big with team collectors – he'll always have a place in a Braves collection."

Two options for collectors looking for something different – and also more valuable – are memorabilia cards and autographed cards.

Memorabilia cards feature a small piece of game-used memorabilia – a jersey, bat, ball, or glove – adhered to the card front. Fans who buy Smoltz's 2005 Upper Deck Ultimate Collection card receive a 1-inch x 1-inch swatch of his uniform. Maddux's 2001 Upper Deck Ovation card comes with a piece of his game-used bat (above).

"These add a new dimension and a new presentation for card collectors," said Terry Melia of Upper Deck. "Once they see that, it gets them closer to the player, because they're actually holding a piece of equipment from that player."

Autographed cards have appeal, especially since their autographs get authenticated. Players such as Sid Bream and Mark Lemke, both popular during the Braves' run, get limited attention from national collectors. But even they can have valuable autographed or memorabilia cards. For example, Bream's card in the 2005 Topps All-Time Fan Favorites Autographs set sells for about $15.

Card collectors like Michael Peters of Canton, Ga., pursue all Braves players, no matter what they achieved on the field.

"I am a life-long Braves fan from here locally," said Peters. "So, if they wore a Braves jersey, I pretty much am a fan."

Peters hopes to locate a 1991 Topps Desert Shield Chipper Jones rookie card. Finding a high grade copy isn't easy. Topps produced a set of its 1991 cards in limited numbers for the U.S. troops serving in Desert Storm and Desert Shield. Since they shipped them to soldiers overseas, many became damaged. As with his aforementioned 1990s teammates, most of Jones' cards aren't expensive. However, the rareness of his Desert Shield series card can make it cost hundreds of dollars.

ALUMNI NOTES

- The late **Lou Burdette** (RHP, 1951-63; Coach, 1972-73), MVP of the 1957 World Series and a member of the Braves Hall of Fame, will be honored again June 11 with induction into the Walk of Fame at Miller Park in Milwaukee.
- Braves Hall of Famer **Greg Maddux** (RHP, 1993-2003) was named as an assistant to Cubs general manager Jim Hendry.
- **Javy Lopez** (C, 1992-2003) launched a flashy web site for his Bones Sports, Inc., at bonesbat.com. Products include bats (adult and youth), training bats and caps, with t-shirts coming soon.
- **Adam LaRoche** (1B, 2004-06, '09) signed a one-year deal with the Arizona Diamondbacks.
- **Mike Gonzalez** (LHP, 2007-08) signed a two-year contract with Baltimore.
- **Mike Stanton** (LHP, 1989-95) is the new head baseball coach at Don Bosco Prep in Ramsey, N.J., one of the top programs in the country.
- **Kelly Johnson** (OF/2B, 2005-09) signed a one-year contract with Arizona.
- **Mark DeRosa** (INF/OF, 1998-2004) signed for two years with the Giants.
- The Phillies signed **Danys Baez** (RHP, 2006) to a two-year contract.
- **George Lombard** (OF, 1998-2001) was named hitting coach of the Lowell Spinners, the short-season Class A affiliate of the Boston Red Sox in the New York-Penn League.
- The Nationals signed **Jason Marquis** (RHP, 2000-03) for two years.
- **Ryan Langerhans** (OF, 2002, '05-07) re-signed with Seattle.
- The Kansas City Royals hired former Brewers manager **Ned Yost** (Coach, 1991-2002) as a special adviser.
- Cincinnati signed **Josh Anderson** (OF, 2008) to a minor league contract.
- The Pirates signed **Ryan Church** (OF, 2009) to a one-year contract.
- Boston traded **Casey Kotchman** (1B, 2008-09) to Seattle for utilityman Bill Hall and a player to be named and cash.
- **Reggie Sanders** (OF, 2000) is now an associate scout with the Royals.
- The Dodgers signed **Russ Ortiz** (RHP, 2003-04) to a minor league contract.
- Pittsburgh named **Mike Lum** (OF/1B, 1967-75, '79-81) coach for the Gulf Coast League Pirates.
- **Denis Menke** (INF/OF, 1962-67) was to be inducted into the Cedar Rapids (Iowa) Baseball Hall of Fame at the annual Hot Stove Banquet on Jan. 28.
- **Bob Uecker** (C, 1962-63, '67) was the master of ceremonies at the Professional Baseball Scouts Foundation annual In the Spirit of the Game dinner and auction Jan. 16 in Los Angeles. Cardinals manager **Tony La Russa** (2B, 1971) received the organization's Tommy Lasorda Manager Award.
- Seattle signed **Chris Woodward** (2007, INF) to a minor league contract with an invitation to spring training.
- The Yankees signed **Royce Ring** (LHP, 2007-08) and **Reid Gorecki** (OF, 2009) to minor league contracts.
- **Otis Nixon** (OF, 1991-93, '99) was the keynote speaker at the Leland (N.C.) Hot Stove League banquet Jan. 15. **Dave Bristol** (Manager, 1976-77) served as an instructor at a baseball clinic the following day at Goldsboro High.
- The Mets signed **Mike Hessman** (1B/OF/3B, 2003-04) to a minor league contract.

BIRTHDAYS

FEBRUARY

1ST	HAL KING (66)
	KENT MERCKER (42)
2ND	RED SCHOENDIENST (87)
	LEO FOSTER (59)
4TH	MAX LEON (60)
5TH	HANK AARON (76)
	LEE THOMAS (74)
	VIC CORRELL (64)
	NORM MILLER (64)
	MIKE HEATH (55)
	CHRIS BROCK (40)
	ERIC O'FLAHERTY (25)
6TH	CHARLIE GORIN (82)
	BOB WICKMAN (41)
7TH	JUAN PIZARRO (73)
	DAMASO GARCIA (55)
	CHARLIE PULEO (55)
8TH	OSCAR BROWN (64)
9TH	JIM NASH (65)
	ED WHITED (46)
	TODD PRATT (43)
10TH	RALPH HODGIN (94)
	BILLY O'DELL (78)
	LARRY MCWILLIAMS (56)
12TH	KEN SMITH (52)
14TH	LEN GABRIELSON (70)
15TH	DUCKY DETWEILER (91)
	JOE HESKETH (51)
16TH	TERRY CROWLEY (63)
	BOB DIDIER (61)
	BILL PECOTA (50)
	DWAYNE HENRY (48)
	RICO ROSSY (46)
	MIKE HUBBARD (39)
17TH	JAMIE EASTERLY (57)
	MIKE MACHA (56)
18TH	DAL MAXVILL (71)
	RAFAEL RAMIREZ (52)
19TH	RUSS NIXON (75)
	BOB SADOWSKI (72)
	DAVE CHEADLE (58)
20TH	DEREK LILLIQUIST (44)
	RYAN LANGERHANS (30)
	BRIAN McCANN (26)
22ND	STEVE COYLER (31)
	KELLY JOHNSON (28)
	CASEY KOTCHMAN (27)
23RD	BOBBY BONILLA (47)
24TH	NICK ESASKY (50)
	STEVE TORREALBA (32)
	DEWAYNE WISE (32)
25TH	ANDY PAFKO (89)
	DENNY LEMASTER (71)
	KEN DAYLEY (51)
26TH	GEORGE KOPACZ (69)
	MARK DEROSA (35)
27TH	PETE SMITH (44)
	JAMES PARR (24)
28TH	MARTY PEREZ (64)
29TH	AL AUTRY (58)

ChopTalk
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WHO'S HITTING 8TH?

TROY GLAUS batted .270 with 27 home runs and 99 RBIs in 2008, his last full season. He barely played in 2009 due to injury. If Glaus hits anywhere like 2008 this season, the Braves are going places.

For starters, Glaus' presence between Chipper and Brian McCann should mean Chipper is going to see some good pitches to hit with not one, but two power bats behind him. He's geared for a big comeback anyway, and having Glaus and McCann behind him should help make that happen.

Most importantly, the depth in the lineup - with McCann hitting fifth instead of fourth, as he did much of last year - has to be intimidating for opposing pitchers. For most of the second half last year, the lineup was pretty imposing, and the results showed in the Braves' run at the wild card. This year, it appears even stronger.

Seriously, there have been plenty of times when I'd have liked to fill in the lineup card, you know, just to take some of the workload off Bobby Cox. Well, he's going to have to make the tough calls by himself this year.

I want no part of telling any of the regulars on this club that they have to hit in front of the pitcher. In fact, I want no part of the batting order speculation - just like opposing pitchers won't want any part of the "bottom" of the Braves' lineup this year.

Nate McLouth - seeing better than he was late last year now that he's wearing contacts - followed by Martin Prado - the sparkplug of last year's resurgence - would appear to be set at 1-2. Then comes Chipper, Glaus and McCann. After that, it might depend on matchups. Yunel Escobar hit very well in the No. 6 slot last year, but Matt Diaz is a lifetime .310 hitter, and Melky Cabrera certainly is no slouch. Jason Heyward could makes things even tougher on Cox, too, if he's ready to stick in Atlanta.

This might sound a little far-fetched at this stage of things, but it's not too hard to see the hitting on this team being every bit as good as the pitching - which is pretty solid, as we know.

There has been much criticism of trading Javier Vazquez, but the rotation remains strong, especially considering that Jair Jurrjens and Tommy Hanson should be even better. And the facts are that Vazquez had the best season of his career last year, and he is entering his "walk" season, after which he'll be eligible for free agency. If Mike Dunn and Arodys Vizcaino are as good as expected, that trade will pay off for a long time.

Frank Wren has given Cox a team that's very capable of winning the division - and more - as a going-away present. Provided the team is reasonably healthy, there's good reason to believe the Braves will be playing beyond Oct. 3 (the last day of the regular season).

The start of spring training is always full of optimism, but there's a strong basis for it this year, more than there has been for a while.

We hope you'll enjoy getting to know Jair Jurrjens better this month with Patty Rasmussen's stories and photos from Curacao. Thanks to Jair and his family for the courtesy and hospitality they showed Patty, and to the Curacao Tourist Board, particularly Hugo Clarinda and Chernov Rozier, for their assistance.

Whether you're going to spring training or not, there are two excellent opportunities on the calendar for getting a "Braves fix" to help get through the off-season. As usual, we strongly recommend that you try to attend the Feb. 13 Braves 400 Fan Cub's annual winter banquet, the Eddie Glennon Gameboree. And the Braves Caravan is making more stops than ever this year, giving fans the opportunity to get up close and personal with the players. See pages 16-17 for details on how to get tickets to the Gameboree and for the Caravan's schedule.

Be sure not to miss this month's Xtra Innings on page 62 for a look at an extremely unique story, and the type of experience that makes baseball such a special game.

THIS ISSUE OF CHOPTALK was mailed Jan. 22. The March issue will be mailed Feb. 17.

BEYOND BASEBALL

BY **PATTY RASMUSSEN**

Sharon Jones (yes, that's her on the left) shocked Chipper (yes, that's him on the right) by learning to shoot a bow on her own and then bagging her first deer without him knowing it.

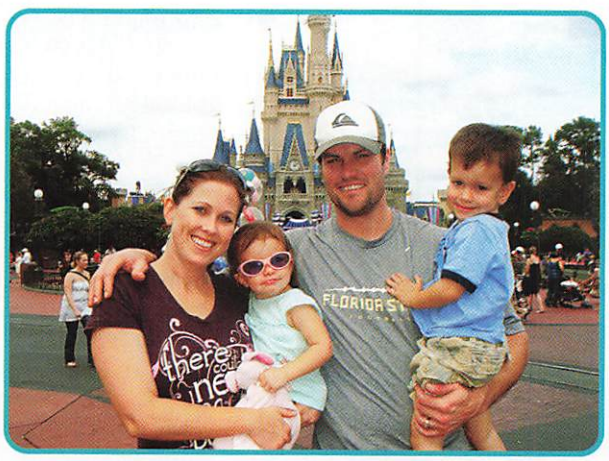
SPECIAL

THE HUNTRESS

SHARON JONES, wife of **Chipper Jones**, had a special surprise for her husband during the Buck Commander shoot, Dec. 13-18, at the Double Dime Ranch in Texas. Unbeknownst to Chipper, Sharon practiced shooting a bow every day for a month at a friend's house in Atlanta. "When we got to the ranch, she would pretend to just hang around the house every time we went out to hunt," said **Carter Smith**, Buck Commander's national sales manager. "She was actually hunting every morning and every afternoon with **Bo Dottley**, one of the cameramen for Buck Commander." One night, Sharon and Bo came rolling up to the shed with the truck tailgate down and her first deer in the back. "You should have seen Chip's face," Smith said. "None of us knew. It was pretty cool."

NATHAN DIAZ, son of **Matt Diaz** and his wife **Leslee**, celebrated his third birthday on a chilly December day at a park in downtown Winter Haven, Fla. The Diazes also took Nathan and his sister, **Anna**, 2, to Disney World (R) in November...

Attention **Skip Caray** fans! A unique t-shirt honoring the late Braves Hall of Fame broadcaster is now being sold at the website skipshirt.com. The front of the shirt (below) is screened with Caray's image and his signature phrase, "Hello again, everybody..." while the back of the shirt reads, "So long, everybody." "The idea for the Skip shirt came from a conversation he and I had one night in Washington," said **Jake Cook**, the former Braves radio producer and great admirer and friend of Caray. "We had just come from Cincinnati, and I commented on how cool it was that the Reds used (broadcasters) **Marty Brennaman** and **Joe Nuxhall** in their marketing of the team. They have Joe's old radio signoff in giant letters on top of the stadium ("The Old Lefthander rounding third and heading for home"), and every time the Reds win, they put a picture of Marty B. on the scoreboard with his signature, 'This one belongs to the Reds.'" Initially Caray balked at Cook's suggestion to make t-shirts, but then warmed to the idea. The shirt initially was sold only to friends of Cook and Caray, but after Caray's death in August 2008, his widow, **Paula**, gave Cook her blessing to sell the t-shirts. In addition to selling the t-shirt, the Skip Shirt site also has photos, a recorded radio tribute, and a place for fans to leave their favorite Skip Caray memories. The shirts cost $20 plus $5 shipping/handling and any sales tax, with a portion of the proceeds going to the Skip Caray Family of Charities, Camp Twin Lakes, Small Animal Rescue and Emory Cancer Research...



PATTY RASMUSSEN

Derek Lowe and his wife **Carolyn** celebrated their first wedding anniversary on Dec. 13. The Lowes welcomed two additions to their family, yellow Labrador puppies Moxie and Maximus...

Bobby Cox and his wife **Pam** took off for their annual January trip to Acapulco, Mexico, just as the temperatures in Atlanta took a nosedive. They

travel to the famous destination each winter with their good friends, **Gerry** and **Kaye Litzinger**...

It was the perfect birthday present for 21-year-old **Troy Snitker**, son of third base coach **Brian Snitker** - four days of deer hunting at the E3 Ranch belonging to former Braves first baseman **Adam LaRoche**. The Snitkers went out just days before Christmas and met with Mississippi Braves manager **Phil Wellman** and his son, **Brett**...

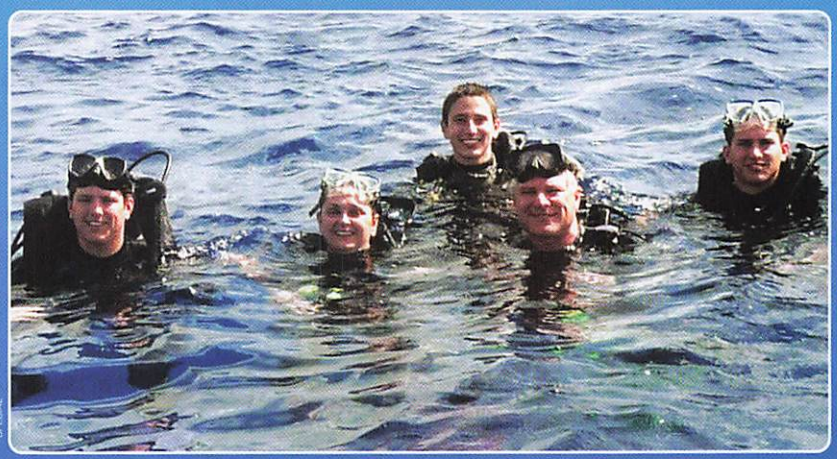
Coach emeritus **Bobby Dews** had a great trip to New York with his daughter, **Dana**. They saw "Phantom of the Opera", "Chicago", and the Rockettes. "I drank 342 cups of coffee in the lobby of the Algonquin hotel with the ghosts. They remembered me, a fellow spirit," joked Dews...

After a busy November, **Tim** and **Kim Hudson** and their family stayed close to home in Peachtree City, Ga., during December. Immediately after Christmas, though, they traveled to Ft. Myers, Fla., to visit Kim's family before spending New Year's Eve, and Kim's birthday, at their farm in Alabama... Tim was the featured speaker at the Ninth Annual Lead Off Dinner for the American Baseball Foundation. The banquet was held Jan. 14, at The Club in Homewood, Ala. The ABF develops and provides support for baseball programs...

The grand opening of the **Tim Hudson** Sports Academy has been postponed until this fall. According to a message on the academy's Facebook page, they needed to put the brakes on the previously scheduled Jan. 23 opening in order to "make the facility a first-class establishment. We will be working over the next several months to accomplish that goal. Tim is preparing for spring training and the Atlanta Braves 2010 season, and he looks forward to dedicating his time and baseball skills to the Academy in Fall 2010."...

Braves organist **Matthew Kaminski** has a jazz CD out. The CD, entitled "Taking My Time," will be available on his website, matthewkaminski.com, via PayPal after Feb. 9. A CD release party will be held Mar. 6 at the Red Light Café in Atlanta. Kaminski developed quite a loyal following during the past season, his first with the Braves. Fans began following him on Twitter (twitter.com/braves organist) and would often suggest clever songs to play for opposing hitters. Some of the favorites were the theme to "Winnie the Pooh" for **Randy Winn**, and "Lady Madonna" when **Alex Rodriguez** came up to bat, a reference to the fact that the Yankees slugger once dated the pop star, **Madonna**.

UNDERWATER GM

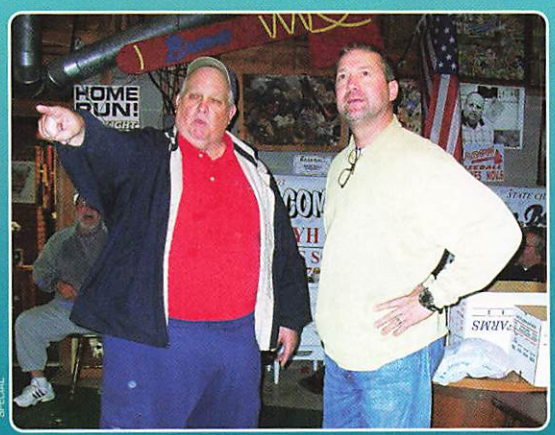


SPECIAL

The Wrens - (L-R) Colby, Terri, Jordan, Frank and Kyle - take a break from their diving in Cozumel to pose for a soggy family portrait.

FRANK WREN, wife **Terri**, and sons **Colby**, **Kyle** and **Jordan** spent five days prior to Christmas in Cozumel, Mexico, on a scuba-diving trip. The family made 10 dives together, and the boys picked up an extra night dive to make it 11 for them.

OATH OF SILENCE



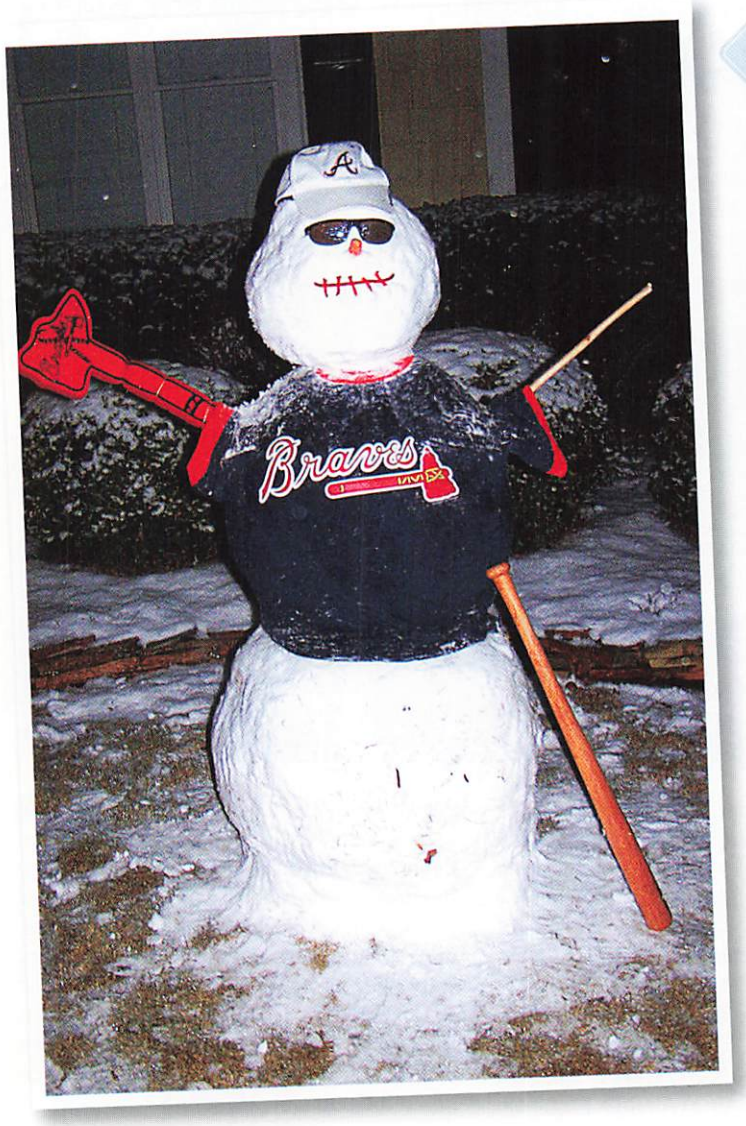
SPECIAL

ROGER MCDOWELL was the guest at the Dec. 9 Forsyth County Hot Stove Baseball Group. The group meets at the Cumming, Ga., home of long-time Braves 400 Fan Club member and past president, **Johnny Tallant** (L with McDowell) in the friendly confines of his basement, aka the Tallant Baseball Museum. According to Tallant, McDowell was an ideal guest, regaling the members with great stories from his playing days, some of which McDowell said they'd need to swear a blood oath to hear! The group meets the second Thursday of each month during the winter and produces a sports internet show. To hear McDowell's talk, check out listenyourway.com and click on the "pod cast archive" link. McDowell, wife **Gloria** and daughters **Amanda** and **Rachel** spent two days after Christmas at Barnsley Gardens resort in Adairsville, Ga.

TALKIN' CHOP

LETTERS & PHOTOS FROM OUR READERS

WHETHER YOU'RE HAVING FUN AT TURNER FIELD, EXPERIENCING A CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH YOUR FAVORITE BRAVES PLAYER, OR JUST SHOWING OFF YOUR COLLECTION OF BRAVES STUFF OR TRYING ON YOUR NEW BRAVES SHIRT, WE WANT TO HEAR ABOUT IT AND SEE A PICTURE.



FROSTY THE BRAVE

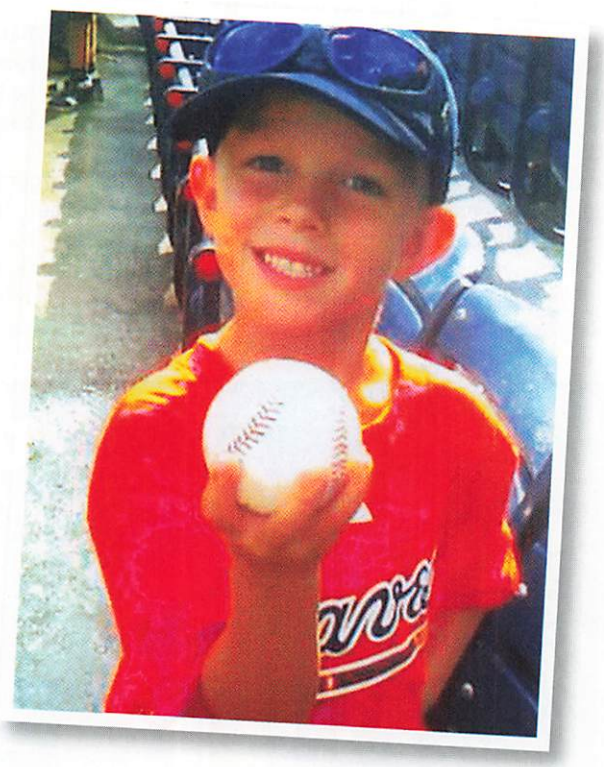
Here's a photo of a Braves-inspired snowman my husband and I made. We would love it so much if you would include it in the magazine. Go Braves!

BRIAN & CASSANDRA BUCKALEW
Marietta, Ga.

BALL BOYS

Kudos to Boone Logan! I took my two grandsons, Jaiden (7) and Devin (5), to their first Braves game. During batting practice, while standing in the left-field stands, Boone singled out Jaiden and tossed him a "shagged" ball. This immediately upset Devin, and I hollered to Boone, "I needed two balls!" and pointed to Jaiden's younger brother. Boone graciously tossed Devin his next "shagged" ball. Needless to say, Boone quickly became their hero for the day. Many thanks to Boone and Braves players like him!

TERI WHISNANT
Mooresboro, N.C.



CARTOON CATCHER

I'm 8-years old and have been a Braves fan all my life. I'm saying "Hey" to Chipper, McCann, Francoeur and Kelly Johnson. ChopTalk is awesome, and I really like the cartoon and stories about Braves players in history. I have a Smoltz jersey, and I'm a catcher for my team.

ETHAN OWENS
Brantley, Ala.

CHOPTALK AND THE ATLANTA BRAVES SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

EXTENDED FAMILY

My wife and I are devoted Braves fans. We live very close to Disney and go to many spring training games at Wide World of Sports, and each year we try to make it to Atlanta to catch a few home games of our beloved Braves. This year we were lucky enough to meet one of the Braves' wonderful staff members who we think is a fantastic ambassador for the team. We subscribe to MLB Extra Innings, so we see nearly all Braves games. At the home games, we see this lady sitting just behind home plate, and we got to the point that we felt we knew her. We introduced ourselves to her before the afternoon game we attended and told her we felt like she was a member of our family since we saw her so often. Her name is Jacque Holloway, and she treated us with so much respect and kindness that we wanted you to know what a wonderful person the Braves have working for them. She answered all our questions and even let us take a few photos with her. Thanks for your great magazine!

SCOTTY & LYNN MEREDITH
Davenport, Fla.

SHARE YOUR BRAVES FEVER!

WRITE TO US

Talkin' Chop c/o ChopTalk
P.O. Box 81247
Conyers, Ga. 30013-9247

Letters@ChopTalkonline.com

Letters and photos chosen for publication are subject to editing, and photos cannot be returned. Computer printouts of photos cannot be published. High-resolution files preferred. ChopTalk reserves the right to use letters and photos for promotional and advertising purposes.

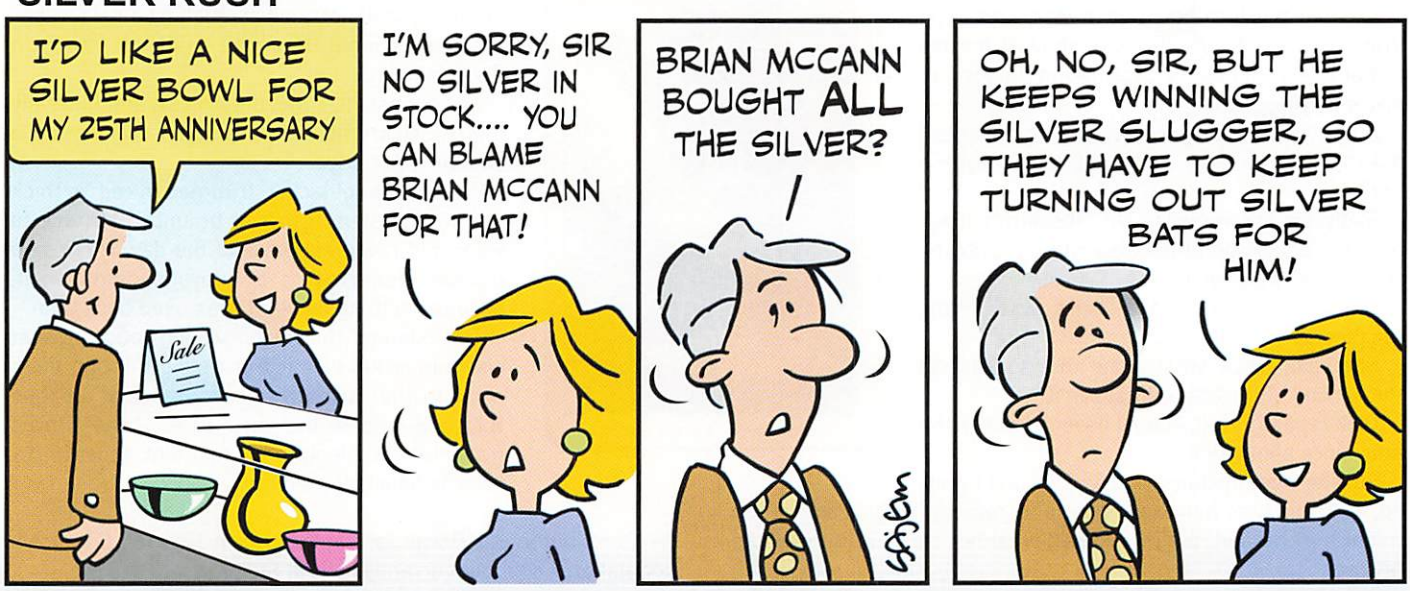
WRITE THE BRAVES

Atlanta Braves
P.O. Box 4064
Atlanta, Ga. 30302

For the Braves players, Bobby Cox, the coaches, broadcasters, or members of the front office.

If you request a response, be sure to include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Never send anything of value that you want returned. This is no guarantee of a reply.

SILVER RUSH


I'D LIKE A NICE SILVER BOWL FOR MY 25TH ANNIVERSARY
Sale
I'M SORRY, SIR NO SILVER IN STOCK.... YOU CAN BLAME BRIAN MCCANN FOR THAT!
BRIAN MCCANN BOUGHT ALL THE SILVER?
OH, NO, SIR, BUT HE KEEPS WINNING THE SILVER SLUGGER, SO THEY HAVE TO KEEP TURNING OUT SILVER BATS FOR HIM!

THE JACKET THAT TIME - AND FAMILY - FORGOT

BY BILL BURGE

MY FAVORITE baseball memory didn't happen in a ballpark, but rather in a farmhouse near my hometown of Charles City, Iowa.

Only one man from this small town ever played in the big leagues, making him one of just 17,000 who have played at the top professional level of the sport.

That player's name is Vive Lindaman. His given name was Vivan Alexander Lindaman, but in baseball he was known as Vive - which rhymes with "Ivy". His tombstone at Calvary Cemetery in Charles City reads "Viva," which apparently was either a mistake or a joke. No one today seems to know!

Lindaman pitched more than a hundred years ago, in Boston, for the early version of the franchise now known as the Atlanta Braves. They were called the Boston Beaneaters in his first season, 1906, and then the Boston Doves in 1907-09 when the franchise went through one of several name changes in its long journey as America's oldest continuously operating sports franchise.

The Boston teams Lindaman played on were definitely the Braves' ancestors, even though they also were known, at times, as the Rustlers and the Bees and relocated from Boston to Milwaukee in 1953 and then moved again in 1966, this time to Atlanta.

That connects today's Braves to Vive Lindaman, just as surely as anyone is connected to his or her great-great-great-great-great grandpa!

While Lindaman's win-loss record of 36-60 is less than stellar, records show the blame for that belongs more to poor fielding and a lack of run support by his teammates than to him.

Actually, Vive pitched admirably, achieving a career ERA of 2.92 with a strong arm that inspires awe by today's standards.

In his rookie season, Vive pitched 32 complete games. Over four years, he threw 83 complete games. In one, called on account of darkness, he lasted 17 innings!

Meanwhile, back to that farmhouse in Iowa. It's where Vive lived and where Vive's son, Dick Lindaman, now 87, has always lived.

I visited the farmhouse last year, and Dick, Vive's only surviving offspring, showed me his father's scrapbook, a fascinating history of Vive's playing days.

After we poured over every single page, I asked, "Do you have a glove, a ball, maybe a bat?"

Sadly, the answer was, "No." It seems a long-ago, fire destroyed almost everything. Only the scrapbook was saved.

Or so it seemed until Dick's wife, Mary, recalled something.

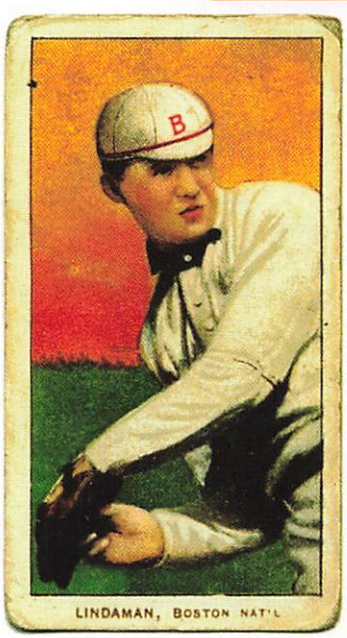
She said, "Dick, what about that suitcase at the far end of the attic? What's in it?"

Dick replied, "Hell, Mary, I haven't been in the attic since about 1950!"

So, she went upstairs, and as Dick and I waited, we could hear her banging around, moving things. I feared she might hurt herself, but I wondered what her treasure hunt would uncover.

MARK WICKS, CHARLES CITY (IOWA) PRESS

Vive Lindaman's son, Dick, and daughter-in-law, Mary, found this century-old "Braves" warmup jacket, that was tucked away in a suitcase in their attic for decades, only at the prompting of a writer.



She returned, lugging an old, black suitcase.

She placed it in front of me and said, "Here, see if you can open it."

I did.

Inside was Vive's 100-year-old old warmup jacket, recently verified as such by a researcher at the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown.

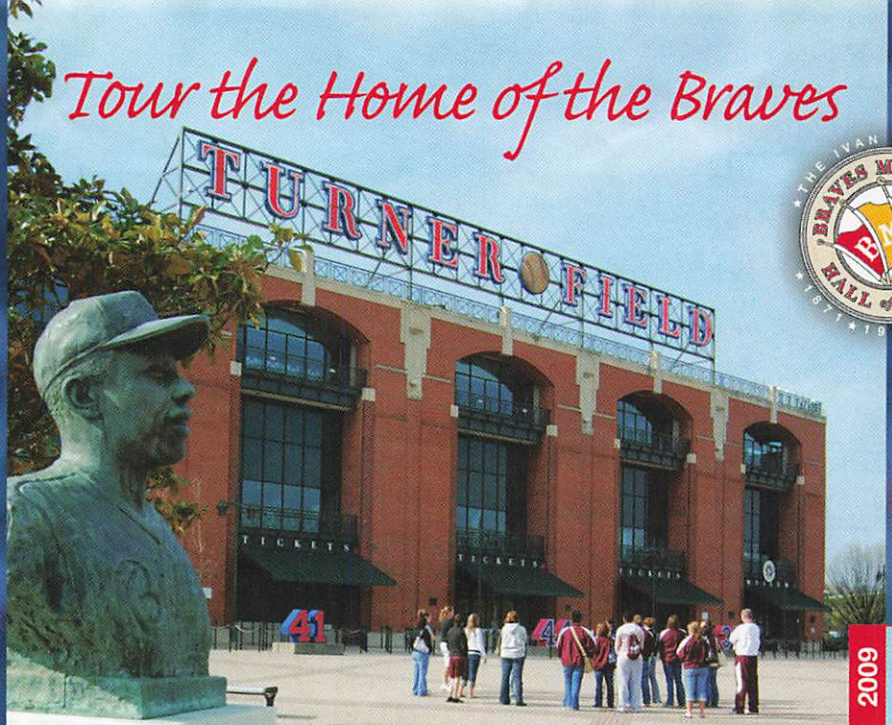
For an instant, I was breathless, and I literally felt myself tremble. I don't recall ever having a similar experience.

The gray wool jacket, trimmed in red, is thick and moth-eaten. It had to be uncomfortable to wear, but it was the style of the day. There's no number, team name or player's name on it, because nothing like that was used back then.

But opening that suitcase and touching that warmup jacket was like traveling through time, back to the formative years of Major League Baseball, and to the early days of the Braves franchise. Suddenly, that moment became my favorite baseball memory.

- Contributor Bill Burge is originally from Charles City, Iowa (population 7,800) but currently lives in St. Louis.

Tour the Home of the Braves



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VISIT THE BRAVES MUSEUM & HALL OF FAME AT TURNER FIELD and view more than 600 Braves artifacts and photographs on display. See items from the team's years in Boston (1871-1952), Milwaukee (1953-65), and Atlanta (1966-present), including Hank Aaron's 715th home run bat and ball, the 1995 World Series trophy and much more.

TAKE A ONE-HOUR GUIDED TOUR OF TURNER FIELD to many areas off limits during games, such as the press box, clubhouse, dugout and the SunTrust Club. Group and school tours are offered year-round, including specialized tours on the subjects of math and careers in sports. **Call 404-614-2311.**

2009	**Dec. 1-22** **A Toy for A Tour**	Children 13 & under who bring a new, unwrapped toy receive a complimentary tour of Turner Field.
2010	**January** **Two for 10 in 2010**	For the month of January, two people can take a tour of Turner Field for $10
2010	**February** **Black History Month**	Children 13 & under who read a book about the Negro Leagues receive a complimentary tour.
2010	**March** **Gearing Up for the 2010 Season**	Adults who donate new or gently-used baseball equipment will receive 50% off adult admission to the museum and tours.

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Braves
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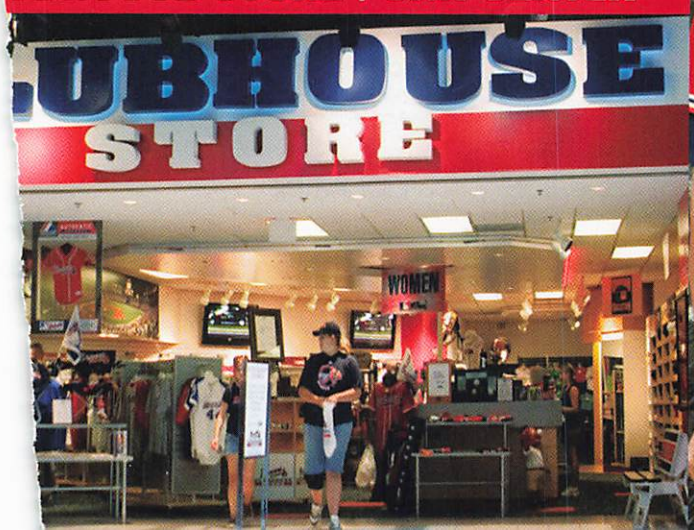
Call 404-523-5854 or visit the Braves Clubhouse Store at CNN Center, 10 am - 6 pm daily



THE MAGIC OF

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- Support Bobby Cox in his last season managing the Braves

2010 BRAVES SCHEDULE

APRIL

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2 CWS EXH 7:00	3 CWS EXH 1:00
4	5 CHI 4:00	6	7 CHI 7:00	8 CHI 7:00	9 SF 4:30	10 SF TBD
11 SF 4:00	12 SD 6:30	13	14 SD 10:00	15 SD 6:30	16 COL 7:30	17 COL 7:00
18 COL 1:30	19	20 PHI 7:00	21 PHI 7:00	22 PHI 7:00	23 NYM 7:00	24 NYM 1:00
25 NYM 8:00	26 STL 8:00	27 STL 8:00	28 STL 8:00	29 STL 1:30	30 HOU 7:30	

MAY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1 HOU 3:00
2 HOU 1:30	3	4 WAS 7:00	5 WAS 7:00	6 WAS 7:00	7 PHI 7:00	8 PHI 3:00
9 PHI 1:30	10 MIL 8:00	11 MIL 8:00	12 MIL 1:00	13	14 ARI 7:30	15 ARI 7:00
16 ARI 1:30	17 NYM 7:00	18 NYM 7:00	19 CIN 7:00	20 CIN 1:00	21 PIT 7:00	22 PIT 7:00
23 PIT 1:30	24	25 FLA 7:00	26 FLA 7:00	27 FLA 7:00	28 PIT 7:30	29 PIT 7:00
30 PIT 1:30	31 PHI 1:00					

JUNE

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1 PHI 7:00	2 PHI 1:00	3 LAD 10:00	4 LAD 10:00	5 LAD 10:00
6 LAD TBD	7 ARI 9:30	8 ARI 9:30	9 ARI 9:30	10 ARI 3:30	11 MIN 8:00	12 MIN 7:00
13 MIN 2:00	14	15 TB 7:00	16 TB 7:00	17 TB 7:00	18 KC 7:30	19 KC 7:00
20 KC 1:30	21	22 CWS 8:00	23 CWS 8:00	24 CWS 2:00	25 DET 7:30	26 DET 7:00
27 DET 1:30	28 WAS 7:00	29 WAS 7:00	30 WAS 7:00			

JULY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2 FLA 7:30	3 FLA 4:00
4 FLA 1:30	5 PHI 7:00	6 PHI 7:00	7 PHI 7:00	8	9 NYM 7:00	10 NYM 4:00
11 NYM 1:00	12 13 14 ALL-STAR GAME ANAHEIM			15 MIL 7:00	16 MIL 7:30	17 MIL 7:00
18 MIL 1:30	19	20 SD 7:00	21 SD 7:00	22 SD 1:00	23 FLA 7:00	24 FLA 7:00
25 FLA 1:00	26	27 WAS 7:00	28 WAS 7:00	29 WAS 12:30	30 CIN 7:00	31 CIN 7:00

AUGUST

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1 CIN 1:00	2 NYM 7:00	3 NYM 7:00	4 NYM 7:00	5 SF 7:00	6 SF 7:30	7 SF 4:00
8 SF 1:30	9 HOU 8:00	10 HOU 8:00	11 HOU 2:00	12	13	14
15 LAD 1:30	16 LAD 7:00	17 WAS 7:00	18 WAS 7:00	19 WAS 1:00		
22 CHI 2:00	23 COL 8:30	24 COL 8:30	25 COL 3:00	26		
29 FLA 1:30	30 NYM 7:00	31 NYM 7:00				

SEPTEMBER

S	M	T
5 FLA 1:00	6 PIT 1:30	7 PIT 7:0
12 STL 1:30	13 WAS 7:00	14 W
19 NYM 1:00	20 PHI 7:00	21
26 WAS 1:30	27 FLA 7:00	2
3 PHI 1:30		

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